

"There's never been any question of giving it up. I resent you saying it. I resent it very much."

"But we haven't met a schedule for the last six months. We haven't completed a run without some sort of breakdown, major or minor. We're losing all our shippers, one after another. How long can we last?"

"You're a pessimist, Eddie. You lack faith. That's what underlines the morale of an organization."

"You mean that nothing's going to be done about the Rio Norte Line?"

"I haven't said that at all. Just as soon as we get the new track—"

"Jim, there isn't going to be any new track." He watched Taggart's eyelids move up slowly. "I've just come back from the office of Associated Steel. I've spoken to Orren Boyle."

"What did he say?"

"He spoke for an hour and a half and did not give me a single straight answer."

"What did you bother him for? I believe the first order of rail wasn't due for delivery until next month."

"And before that, it was due for delivery three months ago."

"Unforeseen circumstances. Absolutely beyond Orren's control."

"And before that, it was due six months earlier. Jim, we have waited for Associated Steel to deliver that rail for thirteen months!"

"What do you want me to do? I can't run Orren Boyle's business."

"I want you to understand that we can't wait."

Taggart asked slowly, his voice half-mocking, half-cautious: "What did my sister say?"

"She won't be back until tomorrow."

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"That's for you to decide."

"Well, whatever else you say, there's one thing you're not going to mention next—and that's Rearden Steel."

Eddie did not answer at once, then said quietly, "All right, Jim. I won't mention it."

"Orren is my friend." He heard no answer. "I resent your attitude. Orren Boyle will deliver that rail just as soon as it's humanly possible. So long as he can't deliver it, nobody can blame us."

"Jim! What are you talking about? Don't you understand that the Rio Norte Line is breaking up—whether anybody blames us or not?"

"People would put up with it—they'd have to—if it weren't for the Phoenix Durango." He saw Eddie's face tighten. "Nobody ever complained about the Rio Norte Line, until the Phoenix Durango came on the scene."

"The Phoenix Durango is doing a brilliant job."

"Imagine a thing called the Phoenix-Durango competing with Taggart Transcontinental! It was nothing but a local milk line for years ago."

"Mexico and
it lose Colo
—don't m

things in eternal resentment of their existence. He looked and drained. He was thirty nine years old.

He lifted his head with irritation, at the sound of door

"Don't bother me, don't bother me don't bother me" said Taggart

Eddie Willers walked toward the desk.

"It's important Jim" he said not raising his voice

"All right, all right, what is it?"

Eddie Willers looked at a map on the wall of the office. The map's colors had faded under the glass—he wondered how many Taggart presidents had sat before it and for how long. The Taggart Transcontinental Railroad, the network of slashing the faded body of the country from New York to San Francisco, looked like a system of blood vessels. It looked as if, once, long ago, the blood had shot down the main artery and the pressure of its own overabundance, had branched out at the points running all over the country. One red streak went westward from Cheyenne Wyoming down to El Paso. The Rio Norte Line of Taggart Transcontinental. New tracing had been added recently and the red streak had been extended south to El Paso—but Eddie Willers turned away hastily when he reached that point.

He looked at James Taggart and said "It's the Rio Norte Line." He noticed Taggart's glance moving down to a corner of the map. "We've had another wreck."

"Railroad accidents happen every day. Did you have to tell me about that?"

"You know what I'm saying Jim. The Rio Norte is done. That track is shot. Down the whole line."

"We are getting a new track."

Eddie Willers continued as if there had been no answer. "The track is shot. It's no use trying to run trains down there. People are giving up trying to use them."

"There is not a railroad in the country. It seems to me it's a national condition. We're not the only ones. Taggart disliked the sight into people's eyes. He had blond hair and that look of scrupulousness."

had to know, because

somebody had to tell you."

"That we've had another accident?"

"That's the Rio Norte Line."

"The expense of this line has been the thing of giving up the Rio Norte."

Isn't fair?" said James Taggart

Isn't it?"

But we always give all our business to Rearden. It seems to me we could give somebody else a chance too. Rearden doesn't need as plenty big enough. We ought to help the smaller fellows too. Otherwise we're just encouraging a monopoly."

Don't talk tripe, Jim."

Why do we always have to get things from Rearden?"

Because we always get them.

Don't like Henry Rearden?"

No. But what does that matter one way or the other? We need steel and he's the only one who can give them to us.

The human element is very important. You have no sense of human element at all."

We're talking about saving a railroad, Jim."

That's of course, of course, but still you haven't any sense of the human element."

O. I haven't."

We give Rearden such a large order for steel rails—"

They're not going to be steel. They're Rearden Metal.

She had always avoided personal reactions, but she was forced to ask her rule when she saw the expression on Taggart's face burst out laughing.

Rearden Metal was a new alloy produced by Rearden after ten years of experiments. He had placed it on the market recently. He received no orders and had found no customers.

Taggart could not understand the transition from the laughter to the sudden tone of Dagny's voice, the voice was cold and harsh.

Drop it, Jim. I know everything you're going to say. Nobody's used it before. Nobody approves of Rearden Metal. Nobody's invested in it. Nobody wants it. Still, our rails are going to be made of Rearden Metal.

But—" said Taggart, "but— but nobody's ever used it before."

She observed with satisfaction that she was silenced by anger. She liked to observe emotions; they were like red lanterns strung in the dark unknown of another's personality, marking vulnerable points. But how one could feel a personal emotion about a metal alloy and what such an emotion indicated was incomprehensible to him, so he could make no use of his discovery.

"The consensus of the best metallurgical authorities," he said, "seems to be highly skeptical about Rearden Metal contending—"

Drop it, Jim."

Well, whose opinion did you take?"

Don't ask for opinions."

What do you go by?"

Judgment.

— "— you take?"

•

It's about it?"

"Then what on earth do you know about Rearden

"That it's the greatest thing ever put on the market."

"Why?"

"Because it's tougher than steel, cheaper than steel
outlast any hunk of metal in existence."

"But who says so?"

"Jim, I studied engineering in college. When I see the
them."

"What did you see?"

"Rearden's formula and the tests he showed me."

"Well, if it were any good, somebody would have used
nobody has." He saw the flash of anger, and went on:

"How can you know it's good? How can you be sure?
you decide?"

"Somebody decides such things, Jim. Who?"

"Well, I don't see why we have to be the first ones to
it at all."

"Do you want to save the Rio Norte Line or not?" He
answer. "If the road could afford it, I would scrap every
rail over the whole system and replace it with Rearden's.
of it needs replacing. None of it will last much longer. But
afford it. We have to get out of a bad hole, first. Do you
to pull through or not?"

"We're still the best railroad in the country. The others are
worse."

"Then do you want us to remain in the hole?"

"I haven't said that! Why do you always oversimplify
the way? And if you're worried about money, I don't see
want to waste it on the Rio Norte Line, when the
Durango has robbed us of all our business down there. Will
money when we have no protection against a competitor who
destroy our investment?"

"Because the Phoenix Durango is an excellent railroad
intend to make the Rio Norte Line better than that. Bec-
cause to have the Rio Norte Line better than that."

"t"

"t"

"t"

He did not like the way her eyes moved to look at him
remained still, looking for a moment.

"I don't see any need for immediate action," he said, he
offended. "Just what do you consider so alarming in the
situation of Taggart Transcontinental?"

"The consequences of your policies, Jim."

"Which policies?"

"That thirteen months' experiment with Associated Steel
one. Your Mexican catastrophe, for another."

"The Board approved the Associated Steel contract,"
hastily. "The Board voted to build the San Sebastián Line.
I don't see why you call it a catastrophe."

use the Mexican government is going to nationalize your
day now."

is a lie!" His voice was almost a scream. "That's nothing
ous rumors! I have it on very good inside authority that—"
it show that you're scared, Jim," she said contemptuously.
ld not answer

no use getting panicky about it now," she said "All we can
ry to cushion the blow. It's going to be a bad blow. Forty
dollars is a loss from which we won't recover easily. But
Transcontinental has withstood many bad shocks in the
I'll see to it that it withstands this one."

refuse to consider, I absolutely refuse to consider the pos-
of the San Sebastián Line being nationalized!"

I right. Don't consider it."

remained silent. He said defensively, "I don't see why you're
get to give a chance to Ellis Wyatt, yet you think it's wrong
to part in developing an underprivileged country that never
chance."

Is Wyatt is not asking anybody to give him a chance. And
not in business to give chances. I'm running a railroad."

That's an extremely narrow view, it seems to me. I don't see
he should want to help one man instead of a whole nation."

am not interested in helping anybody. I want to make money."

That's an impractical attitude. Selfish greed for profit is a thing
of the past. It has been generally conceded that the interests of
the country as a whole must always be placed first in any business
decision which—"

How long do you intend to talk in order to evade the issue,

What issue?"

The order for Rearden Metal."

Beautiful legs, slanting down from the chair's arm in the center
of his vision, annoyed him, they spoiled the rest of his estimate
he remained silent. He was forced to ask, "Did you decide to
do it just like that, on the spur of the moment, over a tele-
phone?"

I decided it six months ago. I was waiting for Hank Rearden to
be ready to go into production."

Don't call him *Hank* Rearden. It's vulgar."

That's what everybody calls him. Don't change the subject."

Why did you have to telephone him last night?"

Couldn't reach him sooner."

Why didn't you wait until you got back to New York and—"

Because I had seen the Rio Norte Line."

"Well, I need time to consider it, to place the matter before the
board, to consult the best—"

"There is no time

"You haven't given me a chance to form an opinion"

"I don't give a damn about your opinion I am not going to argue with you with your Board or with your professors You have a choice to make and you're going to make it now Just say yes or no

"That's a preposterous high handed arbitrary way of—"

Yes or no?"

"That's the trouble with you You always make it Yes or No Things are never absolute like that Nothing is absolute"

"Metal rails are Whether we get them or not, is

She waited He did not answer

Well? she asked

Are you taking the responsibility for it?

"I am"

Go ahead" he said and added but at your own risk I cancel it but I won't commit myself as to what I'll say to the Board"

Say anything you wish

She rose to go He leaned forward across the desk reluctant to end the interview and to end it so decisively

"You realize of course that a lengthy procedure will be required to put this through he said the words sounded almost

"It isn't as simple as that

Oh sure" she said I'll send you a detailed report which I will prepare and which you won't read Eddie will help me get it through the works I'm going to Philadelphia tonight to Rearden He and I have a lot of work to do" She added as simple as that Jim"

She had turned to go when he spoke again—and what he seemed bewilderingly irrelevant "That's all right for you, but you're lucky Others can't do it.

"Do what?"

Other people are human They're sensitive They can't devote their whole life to metals and engines You're lucky—you've had any feelings You've never felt anything at all"

As she looked at him her dark gray eyes went slowly from astonishment to stillness then to a strange expression that was a look of weariness except that it seemed to reflect much more the endurance of this one moment.

"No Jim" she said quietly "I guess I've never felt anything

Eddie Willers followed her to her office Whenever he turned he felt as if the world became clear simple easy to understand—and he forgot his moments of shapeless apprehension He was the only person who found it completely natural that she should be the Operating Vice President of a great railroad even though she was a woman She had told him when he was ten years old that she would run the railroad some day It did not astonish him now just as it had not astonished him that day in a clearing in the woods

When they entered her office when he saw her sit down and

and glance at the memos he had left for her—he felt as he
n his car when the motor caught on and the wheels could
forward

he remembered a matter
he Terminal Division has
he said
any I was going to send
see him Eddie" she
n to get me Ayers of the
phone"
repeated incredulously
k him"

cously eager, inquired of
service he could be to her, she asked, "Can you tell me
her Richard Halley has written a new piano concerto, the
7"

fifth concerto, Miss Taggart? Why, no, of course he hasn't"
re you sure?"

uite sure, Miss Taggart He has not written anything for eight
"

he still alive?"

hy, yes—that is, I can't say for certain he has dropped out
blic life entirely—but I'm sure we would have heard of it if
ad died"

he wrote anything, would you know about it?

of course We would be the first to know We publish all of his
. But he has stopped writing"

see Thank you"

hen Owen Kellogg entered her office, she looked at him with
action She was glad to see that she had been right in her
recollecion of his appearance—his face had the same
ly as that of the young brakeman on the train, the face of the
of man with whom she could deal

down, Mr Kellogg," she said, but he remained standing in
of her desk.

ou had asked me once to let you know if I ever decided to
ge my employment, Miss Taggart," he said "So I came to
ou that I am quitting"

had expected anything but that, it took her a moment
e she asked quietly, "Why?"

or a personal reason"

ere you dissatisfied here?"

o"

ave you received a better offer?"

o"

hat railroad are you going to?"

n not going to any railroad, Miss Taggart."

hen what job are you taking?"

have not decided that yet."

e studied him, feeling slightly uneasy There was no hos

face, he looked straight at her, he answered simply,

he spoke like one who has nothing to hide, or to show, the was polite and empty

"Then why should you wish to quit?"

"It's a personal matter"

"Are you ill? Is it a question of your health?"

"No"

"Are you leaving the city?"

"No"

"Have you inherited money that permits you to retire?"

"No"

"Do you intend to continue working for a living?"

"Yes"

"But you do not wish to work for Taggart Transcontinental?"

"No"

"In that case something must have happened here to cause decision What?"

"Nothing Miss Taggart"

"I wish you'd tell me I have a reason for wanting to know"

"Would you take my word for it, Miss Taggart?"

"Yes"

"No person matter or event connected with my job here any bearing upon my decision"

You have no specific complaint against Taggart Transcontinental?

"None"

"Then I think you might reconsider when you hear what I offer you"

"I'm sorry Miss Taggart I can't"

"May I tell you what I have in mind?"

"Yes if you wish"

"Would you take my word for it that I decided to offer the post I'm going to offer before you asked to see me? I want to know that"

"I will always take your word Miss Taggart"

It's the post of Superintendent of the Ohio Division It's yours if you want it"

ticket, Kellogg Name your price I want you to stay I can't offer anything any other railroad offers you."

"I am not going to work for any other railroad."

"I thought you loved your work"

This was the first sign of emotion in him, just a slight widening of his eyes and an oddly quiet emphasis in his voice when answered "I do"

"Perhaps I am being unfair by coming here to tell you this"

tung, Miss Taggart. I know that you asked me to tell you because you wanted to have a chance to make me a counter-offer. So if I came, it looks as if I'm open to a deal. But I'm not. I came only because I . . . I wanted to keep my word to you."

That one break in his voice was like a sudden flash that told her how much her interest and her request had meant to him, and that his decision had not been an easy one to make.

"Kellogg, is there nothing I can offer you?" she asked.

"Nothing, Miss Taggart. Nothing on earth."

He turned to go. For the first time in her life, she felt helpless and beaten.

"Why?" she asked, not addressing him.

He stopped. He shrugged and smiled—he was alive for a moment and it was the strangest smile she had ever seen. It held secret amusement, and heartbreak, and an infinite bitterness. He answered:

"Who is John Galt?"

Chapter II THE CHAIN

It began with a few lights. As a train of the Taggart line rolled toward Philadelphia, a few brilliant, scattered lights appeared in the darkness, they seemed purposeless in the empty plain, yet too powerful to have no purpose. The passengers watched them idly, without interest.

The black shape of a structure came next, barely visible against the sky, then a big building close to the tracks, the building was dark, and the reflections of the train lights streaked across the solid glass of its walls.

An oncoming freight train hid the view, filling the windows with a rushing smear of noise. In a sudden break above the flat cars the passengers saw distant structures under a faint reddish glow in the sky, the glow moved in irregular spasms as if the structures were breathing.

When the freight train vanished, they saw angular buildings wrapped in coils of steam. The rays of a few strong lights cut straight sheafs through the coils. The steam was red as the sky.

The thing that came next did not look like a building, but like a shell of checkered glass enclosing girders, cranes and trusses in a solid, blinding, orange spread of flame.

The passengers could not grasp the complexity of what seemed to be a city stretched for miles, active without sign of human presence. They saw towers that looked like contorted skyscrapers, bridges hanging in mid air, and sudden wounds spouting fire from out of solid walls. They saw a line of glowing cylinders moving through the night, the cylinders were red hot metal.

An office building appeared, close to the tracks. The big neon sign on its roof lighted the interiors of the coaches as they by. It said REARDEN STEEL.

A passenger, who was a professor of economics, remarked to his companion: "Of what importance is an individual in

collective achievements of our industrial age?" Another, who was a journalist, made a note for future use in his column "Hank Rearden is the kind of man who sticks his name on everything he touches. You may, from this, form your own opinion about the character of Hank Rearden."

The train was speeding on into the darkness when a red gasp shot to the sky from behind a long structure. The passengers paid no attention, one more heat of steel being poured was not an event they had been taught to notice.

It was the first heat for the first order of Rearden Metal.

To the men at the tap hole of the furnace inside the mills, the first break of the liquid metal into the open came as a shocking sensation of morning. The narrow streak pouring through space had the pure white color of sunlight. Black coils of steam were boiling upward, streaked with violent red. Fountains of sparks shot in beating spasms, as from broken arteries. The air seemed torn to rags reflecting a raging flame that was not there, red blotches whirling and running through space, as if not to be contained within a man-made structure, as if about to consume the columns, the girders, the bridges of cranes overhead. But the liquid metal had no aspect of violence. It was a long white curve, the texture of satin and the friendly radiance of a smile. It flowed obediently through a spout of clay, with two brittle borders to restrain it. It fell through twenty feet of space down into a stream that held two hundred tons. A flow of stars hung above the stream, leaping out of its placid smoothness, looking delicate as lace and innocent as children's sparklers. Only on a closer glance could one notice that the white satin was boiling. Splashes flew out at times and fell to the ground below; they were metal and, cooling while hitting the soil, they burst into flame.

Two hundred tons of metal which was to be harder than steel, running liquid at a temperature of four thousand degrees, had the power to annihilate every wall of the structure and every one of the men who worked by the stream. But every inch of its course, every pound of its pressure and the content of every molecule within it, were controlled and made by a conscious intention that had worked upon it for ten years.

Swinging through the darkness of the shed, the red glare kept slashing the face of a man who stood in a distant corner; he stood leaning against a column watching. The glare cut a moment's wedge across his eyes, which had the color and quality of pale blue ice—then across the black web of the metal column and the ash-blond strands of his hair—then across the belt of his trench coat and the pockets where he held his hands. His body was tall and gaunt, he had always been too tall for those around him. His face was cut by prominent cheekbones and by a few sharp lines; they were not the lines of age he had always had them. This had made him look old at twenty, and young now, at forty-five. Ever since he could remember, he had been told that his face was ugly, because it was unyielding, and cruel, because it was expressionless.

remained expressionless now, as he looked at the metal. He was Hank Rearden.

The metal came rising to the top of the ladle and went running over with arrogant prodigality. Then the blinding white trickles turned to glowing brown, and in one more instant they were black icicles of metal, starting to crumble off. The slag was crusting in thick, brown ridges that looked like the crust of the earth. As the crust grew thicker, a few craters broke open with the white liquid still boiling within.

A man came riding through the air, in the cab of a crane overhead. He pulled a lever by the casual movement of one hand, steel hooks came down on a chain, seized the handles of the ladle, lifted it smoothly like a bucket of milk—and two hundred tons of metal went sailing through space toward a row of molds waiting to be filled.

Hank Rearden leaned back, closing his eyes. He felt the column trembling with the rumble of the crane. The job was done, he thought.

A worker saw him and grinned in understanding like a fellow accomplice in a great celebration, who knew why that tall blond figure had had to be present here tonight. Rearden smiled in answer: it was the only salute he had received. Then he started back for his office, once again a figure with an expressionless face.

It was late when Hank Rearden left his office that night to walk from his mills to his house. It was a walk of some miles through empty country, but he had felt like doing it, without conscious reason.

He walked, keeping one hand in his pocket, his fingers closed about a bracelet. It was made of Rearden Metal, in the shape of a chain. His fingers moved, feeling its texture once in a while. It had taken ten years to make that bracelet. Ten years he thought is a long time.

The road was dark, edged with trees. Looking up, he could see a few leaves against the stars; the leaves were twisted and dry, ready to fall. There were distant lights in the windows of houses scattered through the countryside, but the lights made the road seem lonelier.

He never felt loneliness except when he was happy. He turned, once in a while, to look back at the red glow of the sky over the mills.

He did not think of the ten years. What remained of them tonight was only a feeling which he could not name, except that it was quiet and solemn. The feeling was a sum, and he did not have to count again the parts that had gone to make it. But the parts, unrecalled, were there, within the feeling. They were the nights spent at scorching ovens in the research laboratory of the

—the nights spent in the workshop of his home, over paper which he filled with formulas, then tore up in angry

—the days when the young scientists of the small staff chosen to assist him waited for instructions like soldiers, a hopeless band exhausted their ingenuity,

but silent with the unspoken sentence hanging in the air "Mr Rearden it can't be done—"

—the meals interrupted and abandoned at the sudden flash of a new thought a thought to be pursued at once to be tried to be tested to be worked on for months, and to be discarded as another failure—

—the moments snatched from conferences, from contracts from the duties of running the best steel mills in the country, snatched almost guiltily — for a secret love—

—the one thought held immovably across a span of ten years, under everything he did and everything he saw, the thought held in his mind when he looked at the buildings of a city, at the track of a railroad at the light in the windows of a distant farmhouse, at the knife in the hands of a beautiful woman cutting a piece of fruit at a banquet the thought of a metal alloy that would do more than steel had ever done a metal that would be to steel what steel had been to iron—

—the acts of self racking when he discarded a hope or a sample, not permitting himself to know that he was tired not giving him self time to feel, driving himself through the wringing torture of "not good enough still not good enough and going on with no motor save the conviction that it could be done—

—then the day when it was done and its result was called Rearden Metal—

—these were the things that had come to white heat, had melted and fused within him, and their alloy was a strange, quiet feeling
and wonder

ist, as if
be seen
again He did not want to look at them, he despised memories as a pointless indulgence But then he understood that he thought of them tonight in honor of that piece of metal in his pocket Then he permitted himself to look

He saw the day when he stood on a rocky ledge and felt a thread of sweat running from his temple down his neck He was fourteen

thirty years old. What then mattered
matter, just as pain had not mattered He had worked in mines, in foundries in the steel mills of the north moving toward the purpose he had chosen All he remembered of those jobs was that the men around him had never seemed to know what to do while he had always known He remembered wondering why so many iron mines were closing, just as these had been about to close until he took them over He looked at the shelves of rock in the

distance Workers were putting up a new sign above a gate at the end of a road Rearden Ore

He saw an evening when he sat slumped across his desk in that office It was late and his staff had left, so he could be there alone, unwitnessed. He was tired It was as if he had run a race against his own body, and all the exhaustion of years, which he had refused to acknowledge, had caught him at once and flattened him against the desk top He felt nothing, except the desire not to move He did not have the strength to feel—not even to suffer He had burned everything there was to burn within him, he had scattered so many sparks to start so many things—and he wondered whether someone could give him now the spark he needed, now when he felt unable ever to rise again He asked himself who had started him and kept him going Then he raised his head Slowly, with the greatest effort of his life, he made his body rise until he was able to sit upright with only one hand pressed to the desk and a trembling arm to support him He never asked that question again

He saw the day when he stood on a hill and looked at a grimy wasteland of structures that had been a steel plant It was closed and given up He had bought it the night before There was a strong wind and a gray light squeezed from among the clouds In that light, he saw the brown red of rust, like dead blood on the steel of the giant cranes—and bright, green, living weeds like gorged cannibals, growing over piles of broken glass at the foot of walls made of empty frames At a gate in the distance, he saw the black silhouettes of men They were the unemployed from the rotting hovels of what had once been a prosperous town They stood silently looking at the hill and left at the gate of the

the hill was the Hank
and whether it was true
historical cycle of steel-
ing down a newspaper

was said, and experts agree that Henry Rearden's venture into steel is hopeless You may soon witness the sensational end of the sensational Henry Rearden"

That was ten years ago Tonight, the cold wind on his face felt like the wind of that day He turned to look back The red glow of the mills breathed in the sky, a sight as life giving as a sunrise.

These had been his stops, the stations which an express had reached and passed He remembered nothing distinct of the years between them, the years were blurred, like a streak of speed.

Whatever it was, he thought, whatever the strain and the agony, they were worth it, because they had made him reach this day when the first heat of the first order of Rearden had been poured, to become rails for Taggart Tran

He touched the bracelet in his pocket. He had had that first poured metal It was for his wife

As he touched it, he realized suddenly that he had abstraction called "his wife"—not of the woman to married He felt stab of regret, wishing he bracelet, then

He shook his head. This was not the time for his old doubts. He felt that he could forgive anything to anyone, because happiness was the greatest agent of purification. He felt certain that every living being wished him well tonight. He wanted to meet someone, to face the first stranger, to stand disarmed and open, and to say, "Look at me." People, he thought, were as hungry for a sight of joy as he had always been—for a moment's relief from that gray load of suffering which seemed so inexplicable and unnecessary. He had never been able to understand why men should be unhappy.

The dark road had risen imperceptibly to the top of a hill. He stopped and turned. The red glow was a narrow strip, far to the west. Above it, small at a distance of miles, the words of a neon sign stood written on the blackness of the sky: REARDEN STEEL.

He stood straight that in the darkness He thought the country Rearden He thought of the day to light a neon sign above them saying Rearden Life.

He turned sharply and walked on. As the road came closer to his house, he noticed that his steps were slowing down and that something was ebbing away from his mood. He felt a dim reluctance to enter his home which he did not want to feel. No, he thought, not tonight. They'll understand it, tonight. But he did not know, he had never defined, what it was that he wanted them to understand.

He saw lights in the windows of the living room when he approached his house. The house stood on a hill rising before him like a big white bulk. It looked naked, with a few semi-colonial pillars for reluctant ornament, it had the cheerless look of a nudity not worth revealing.

He was not certain whether his wife noticed him when he entered the living room. She sat by the fireplace, talking, the curve of her arm floating in graceful emphasis of her words. He heard a small break in her voice and thought that she had seen him, but she did not look up and her sentence went on smoothly; he could not be certain.

"—but it's just that a man of culture is bored with the alleged wonders of purely material ingenuity," she was saying. "He simply refuses to get excited about plumbing."

Then she turned her head, looked at Rearden in the shadows across the long room and her arms spread gracefully, like two swan necks by her sides.

"Why, darling," she said in a bright tone of amusement, "isn't it too early to come home? Wasn't there some slag to sweep or tuyères to polish?"

They all turned to him—his mother, his brother Philip and Paul Larkin, their old friend.

"I'm sorry," he answered. "I know I'm late."

"Don't say you're sorry," said his mother. "You could have telephoned." He looked at her, trying vaguely to remember something.

"You promised to be here for dinner tonight."

"Oh, that's right, I did I'm sorry But today at the mills, we poured—" He stopped, he did not know what made him unable to utter the one thing he had come home to say, he added only, "It's just that I . . . forgot."

"That's what Mother means," said Philip

"Oh, I . . . yet he's still at
off Henry"

sted eyes of an
did you get in?"

"Oh, I just hopped down on the five thirty five from New York." Larkin was smiling in gratitude for the attention

"Trouble?"

"Who hasn't got trouble these days?" Larkin's smile became resigned, to indicate that the remark was merely philosophical "But no, no special trouble this time I just thought I'd drop in to see you."

His wife laughed "You've disappointed him Paul" She turned to Rearden. "Is it an inferiority complex or a superiority one Henry? Do you believe that nobody can want to see you just for your own sake, or do you believe that nobody can get along without your help?"

He wanted to utter an angry denial, but she was smiling at him as if this were merely a conversational joke and he had no capacity for the sort of conversations which were not supposed to be meant, so he did not answer He stood looking at her wondering about the things he had never been able to understand.

Lillian Rearden was generally regarded as a beautiful woman She had a tall, graceful body, the kind that looked well in high waisted gowns of the Empire style, which she made it a practice to wear Her exquisite profile belonged to a cameo of the same period its pure, proud lines and the lustrous, light brown waves of her hair, worn with classical simplicity, suggested an austere, imperial beauty But when she turned full face people experienced a small shock of disappointment Her face was not beautiful The eyes were the flaw they were vaguely pale, neither quite gray nor brown, lifelessly empty of expression Rearden had always wondered, since she seemed amused so often, why there was no gaiety in her face.

"We have met before, dear," she said, in answer to his silent scrutiny, "though you don't seem to be sure of it"

"Have you had any dinner, Henry?" his mother asked there was a reproachful impatience in her voice, as if his hunger were a personal insult to her

"Yes . . . No . . . I wasn't hungry"

"I'd better ring to have them—"

"No, Mother, not now, it doesn't matter"

"That's the trouble I've always had with you" She was not looking at him, but reciting words into space "It's no use trying to do things for you, you don't appreciate it. I could never make you eat properly"

Henry you work too hard said Philip "It's not good for you."
Rearden laughed "I like it."

"That's what you tell yourself. It's a form of neurosis, you know. When a man drowns himself in work it's because he's trying to escape from something. You ought to have a hobby."

"Oh, Phil, for Christ's sake!" he said, and regretted the irritation in his voice.

Philip had always been in precarious health, though doctors had

"You ought to learn to have some fun," said Philip. "Otherwise, you'll become dull and narrow. Single-tracked, you know. You ought to get out of your little private shell and take a look at the world. You don't want to miss life the way you're doing."

Fighting anger, Rearden told himself that this was Philip's form of solicitude. He told himself that it would be unjust to feel resentment; they were all trying to show their concern for him—and he wished these were not the things they had chosen for concern.

"I had a pretty good time today, Phil," he answered, smiling—and wondered why Philip did not ask him what it was.

He wished one of them would ask him. He was finding it hard to concentrate. The sight of the running metal was still burned into his mind, filling his consciousness, leaving no room for anything else.

"You might have apologized; only I ought to know better than to expect it." It was his mother's voice; he turned. She was looking at him with that injured look which proclaims the long bearing patience of the defenseless.

"Mrs. Beacham was here for dinner," she said reproachfully.

"What?"

"Mrs. Beacham. My friend Mrs. Beacham."

"Yes?"

"I told you about her. I told you many times, but you never remember anything. I say Mrs. Beacham was so anxious to meet you, but she had to leave after dinner; she couldn't wait. Mrs. Beacham is a very busy person. She wanted to much to tell you about the wonderful work we're doing in our parish school, and about the classes in metal craftsmanship, and about the beautiful wrought-iron doorknobs that the little slum children are making all by themselves."

It took the whole of his sense of consideration to force himself to answer evenly. "I'm sorry if I disappointed you, Mother."

"You're not sorry. You could've been here if you'd made the effort. But when did you ever make an effort for anybody but yourself? You're not interested in any of us or in anything we do. You think if you pay the bills that's enough, don't you? Money! That's all you know. And all you give us is money. Have you ever given us any time?"

If this meant that she missed him, he thought, then it

affection, and if it meant affection, then he was unjust to experience a heavy, murky feeling which kept him silent lest his voice betray that the feeling was disgust.

"You don't care," her voice went half-spitting, half begging on Lillian needed you today for a very important problem, but I told her it was no use waiting to discuss it with you."

"Oh, Mother, it's not important!" said Lillian. "Not to Henry."

He turned to her. He stood in the middle of the room, with his trenchcoat still on, as if he were trapped in an unreality that would not become real to him.

"It's not important at all," said Lillian gaily, he could not tell whether her voice was apologetic or boastful. "It's not business. It's purely non-commercial."

"What is it?"

"Just a party I'm planning to give."

"A party?"

"Oh, don't look frightened, it's not for tomorrow night. I know that you're so very busy, but it's for three months from now and I want it to be a very big, very special affair, so would you promise me to be here that night and not in Minnesota or Colorado or California?"

She was looking at him in an odd manner, speaking too lightly and too purposefully at once, her smile overstressing an air of innocence and suggesting something like a hidden trump card.

"Three months from now?" he said. "But you know that I can't tell what urgent business might come up to call me out of town."

"Oh, I know! But couldn't I make a formal appointment with you, way in advance, just like any railroad executive, automobile manufacturer or junk—I mean, scrap—dealer? They say you never miss an appointment. Of course, I'd let you pick the date to suit your convenience." She was looking up at him, her glance acquiring a certain intensity.

"It makes no difference to me."

She said gently, "December tenth is our wedding anniversary, Henry."

They were all watching his face, if they expected a look of guilt, what they saw, instead, was a faint smile of amusement. She could not have intended this as a trap, he thought, because he could escape it so easily, by refusing to accept any blame for his forgetfulness and by leaving her spurned, she knew that his feeling for her was her only weapon. Her motive, he thought, was a proudly indirect attempt to test his feeling and to confess her own. A party was not his form of celebration, but it was hers. It meant, in his terms, in hers it meant the best tribute she could offer, and to their marriage. He had to respect her intention, he thought even if he did not share her standards, even if he did not care whether he still cared for any tribute from her. He had to win, he thought, because she had thrown herself upon him.

He smiled, an open, unresentful smile in acknowledgment of her victory. "All right, Lillian," he said quietly, "I promise to be here on the night of December tenth."

"Thank you, dear." Her smile had a closed, mysterious quality; he wondered why he had a moment's impression that his attitude had disappointed them all.

If she trusted him, he thought, if her feeling for him was still alive, then he would match her trust. He had to say it, words were a lens to focus one's mind, and he could not use words for anything else tonight. "I'm sorry I'm late, Lillian, but today at the mills we poured the first heat of Rearden Metal."

There was a moment of silence. Then Philip said, "Well, that's nice."

The others said nothing.

He put his hand in his pocket. When he touched it, the reality of the bracelet swept out everything else, he felt as he had felt when the liquid metal had poured through space before him.

"I brought you a present, Lillian."

He did not know that he stood straight and that the gesture of his arm was that of a returning crusader offering his trophy to his love, when he dropped a small chain of metal into her lap.

Lillian Rearden picked it up, hooked on the tips of two straight fingers, and raised it to the light. The links were heavy, crudely made, the shining metal had an odd tinge, it was greenish blue.

"What's that?" she asked.

"The first thing made from the first heat of the first order of Rearden Metal."

"You mean," she said, "it's fully as valuable as a piece of railroad rails?"

He looked at her blankly.

She juggled the bracelet, making it sparkle under the light. "Henry, it's perfectly wonderful! What originality! I shall be the sensation of New York, wearing jewelry made of the same stuff as bridge girders, truck motors, kitchen stoves, typewriters, and—what was it you were saying about it the other day, darling?—soup kettles?"

"God, Henry, but you're concerted!" said Philip.

Lillian laughed. "He's a sentimentalist. All men are. But, darling,

I do appreciate it."

"No, it's sweet," said Lillian. "It's charming." She dropped the bracelet down on the table. She got up, put her hands on Rearden's shoulders, and raising herself on tiptoe, kissed him on the cheek.

"Thank you, dear."

He did not move, did not bend his head down to her.

After a while, he turned, took off his coat and sat down by the fire, apart from the others. He felt nothing but an immense exhaustion.

He did not listen to their talk. He heard dimly that Lillian was arguing, defending him against his mother.

"I know him better than you do," his mother was saying. "Hank Rearden's not interested in man, beast or weed unless it's tied in some way to himself and his work. That's all he cares about. I've tried my best to teach him some humility, I've tried all my life, but I've failed."

He had offered his mother unlimited means to live as and where she pleased, he wondered why she had insisted that she wanted to live with him. His success, he had thought, meant something to her, and if it did, then it was a bond between them, the only kind of bond he recognized, if she wanted a place in the home of her successful son, he would not deny it to her.

"It's no use hoping to make a saint out of Henry, Mother," said Philip. "He wasn't meant to be one."

"Oh but, Philip, you're wrong!" said Lillian. "You're so wrong! Henry has all the makings of a saint. That's the trouble."

What did they seek from him?—thought Rearden—what were they after? He had never asked anything of them, it was they who wished to hold him, they who pressed a claim on him—and the claim seemed to have the form of affection, but it was a form which he found harder to endure than any sort of hatred. He despised causeless affection, just as he despised unearned wealth. They professed to love him for some unknown reason and they ignored all the things for which he could wish to be loved. He wondered what response they could hope to obtain from him in such manner—if his response was what they wanted. And it was, he thought, else why those constant complaints, those unceasing accusations about his indifference? Why that chronic air of suspicion, as if they were waiting to be hurt? He had never had a desire to hurt them, but he had always felt their defensive, reproachful expectation. They seemed wounded by anything he said, it was not a matter of his words or actions, it was almost . . . almost as if they were wounded by the mere fact of his being. Don't start imagining the insane—he told himself severely, struggling to face the riddle with the strictest of his ruthless sense of justice. He could not condemn them without understanding, and he could not understand.

Did he like them? No, he thought, he had wanted to like them, which was not the same. He had wanted it in the name of some unstated potentiality which he had once expected to see in any human being. He felt nothing for them now, nothing but the merciless zero of indifference, not even the regret of a loss. Did he need any person as part of his life? Did he miss the feeling he had to feel? No, he thought. Had he ever missed it? Yes, he in his youth, not any longer.

His sense of exhaustion
boredom. He owed

growing, he realized that
of losing it, he

and sat motionless fighting a desire for sleep that was turning into physical pain

His eyes were closing when he felt two soft moist fingers touching his hand Paul Larkin had pulled a chair to his side and was leaning over for a private conversation

"I don't care what the industry says about it, Hank you've got a great product in Rearden Metal a great product it will make a fortune I'll like everything you touch"

"Yes" said Rearden "it will"

"I just I just hope you don't run into trouble"

What trouble?

Oh I don't know the way things are nowadays there's people who but how can we tell? anything can happen

"What trouble?"

Larkin sat hunched looking up with his gentle pleading eyes His short plumpish figure always seemed unprotected and in complete as if he needed a shell to shrink into at the slightest touch His wistful eyes his lost helpless appealing smile served as substitute for the shell The smile was disarming like that of a boy who throws himself at the mercy of an incomprehensible universe He was fifty three years old

Your public relations aren't any too good Hank" he said "You've always had a bad press"

"So what?"

"You're not popular Hank."

"I haven't heard any complaints from my customers"

"That's not what I mean You ought to hire yourself a good press agent to sell you to the public"

What for? It's steel that I'm selling

"But you don't want to have the public against you Public opinion you know—it can mean a lot"

"I don't think the public's against me And I don't think that it means a damn one way or another"

"The newspapers are against you"

"They have time to waste I haven't"

"I don't like it Hank It's not good."

"What?"

"What they write about you"

"What do they write about me?"

"Well you know the s off That you're intractable That you're ruthless That you won't allow anyone any voice in the running of your mills That your only goal is to make steel and to make money"

"But that is my only goal"

"But you shouldn't say it"

"Why not? What is it I'm supposed to say?"

"Oh I don't know But your mills—"

"They're my mills aren't they?"

es but—but you shouldn't remind people of that too loudly.

... You know how it is nowadays . . . They think that your attitude is anti-social."

"I don't - I don't know what they think."

"Living at?"
"One never knows what happens in times like these. One has to be so careful." Rearden chuckled. "You're not trying to worry about me, are you?"

"It's just that I'm your friend, Hank. I'm your friend. You know how much I admire you."

Paul Larkin had always been unlucky. Nothing he touched ever came off quite well, nothing ever quite failed or succeeded. He was a businessman, but he could not manage to remain for long in any one line of business. At the moment, he was struggling with a modest plant that manufactured mining equipment.

He had clung to Rearden for years, in awed admiration. He came for advice, he asked for loans at times, but not often, the loans were modest and were always repaid, though not always on time. His motive in the relationship seemed to resemble the need of an anemic person who receives a kind of living transfusion from the mere sight of a savagely overabundant vitality.

Watching Larkin's efforts, Rearden felt what he did when he watched a man who was a stick in the mud. It's so hard

So he gave advice, never he could

"D. A. S. . . ."

"I . . ."

You ought to be sure of it. It's important. It's very important. Rearden, and repeated with a kind of stressed insistence as if discharging a painful moral duty, "Hank, it's very important."

"I suppose so."

"In fact, that's what I came here to tell you."

"For any special reason?"

Larkin considered it and decided that the duty was discharged. "No," he said.

Rearden disliked the subject. He knew that it was necessary to have a man to protect him from the legislature, all industrialists had to employ such men. But he had never given much attention to this aspect of his business, he could not quite convince himself that it was necessary. An inexplicable kind of distaste, part fastidiousness, part boredom, stopped him whenever he tried to consider it.

"Trouble is Paul," he said, thinking aloud, "that the men who are to pick for that job are such a crummy lot."

Larkin looked away. "That's life," he said.

"Damned if I see why. Can you tell me that? What's with the world?"

Larkin shrugged sadly "Why ask useless questions? How deep is the ocean? How high is the sky? Who is John Galt?"

Rearden sat up straight "No," he said sharply "No There's no reason to feel that way"

He got up His exhaustion had gone while he talked about his business He felt a sudden spurt of rebellion, a need to recapture and defiantly to reassert his own view of existence, that sense of **II** which he had held while walking home tonight and which now seemed threatened in some nameless manner

He paced the room his energy returning He looked at his family They were bewildered unhappy children—he thought—all of them, even his mother and he was foolish to resent their ineptitude it came from their helplessness, not from malice **II** was he who had to make himself learn to understand them, since he had so much to give, since they could never share his sense of joyous, boundless power

He glanced **III** them from across the room. His mother and Philip were engaged in some eager discussion, but he noted that they were not really eager, they were nervous Philip sat in a low chair, his stomach forward his weight on his shoulder blades, as if the miserable discomfort of his position were intended to punish the onlookers

"What's the matter Phil?" Rearden asked, approaching him "You look done in."

"I've had a hard day," said Philip sullenly

"You're not the only one who works hard," said his mother "Others have problems, too—even if they're not billion-dollar, trans super-continental problems like yours"

"Why that's good I always thought that Phil should find some interest of his own"

"Good? You mean you like to see your brother sweating his health away? It amuses you, doesn't it? I always thought it did"

"Why no Mother I'd like to help"

"You don't have to help You don't have to feel anything for any of us"

Rearden had never known what his brother was doing or wishing to do. He had seen Phil

.

Let him take it easy Rearden had thought for years let him have a chance to choose his career without the strain of struggling for a livelihood.

"What were you doing today, Phil?" he asked patiently

"It wouldn't interest you."

"It does interest me That's why I'm asking"

"I had to see twenty different people all over the place, from here to Redding to Wilmington"

"What did you have to see them about?"

tic

ac

the last six months. It seemed to be devoted to some sort of free lectures on psychology, folk music and co-operative farming. Rearden felt contempt for groups of that kind and saw no reason for a closer inquiry into their nature.

He remained silent. Philip added without being prompted: "We need ten thousand dollars for a vital program, but it's a martyr's task, trying to raise money. There's not a speck of social conscience left in people. When I think of the kind of bloated money bags I saw today—why they spend more than that on any whim, but I couldn't squeeze just a hundred bucks a piece out of them, which was all I asked. They have no sense of moral duty, no. What are you laughing at?" he asked sharply. Rearden stood before him, grinning.

It was so childishly blatant, thought Rearden, so helplessly crude the hint and the insult, offered together. It would be so easy to squash Philip by returning the insult, he thought—by returning an insult which would be deadly because it would be true—that he could not bring himself to utter it. Surely he thought the poor fool knows he's at my mercy, knows he's opened himself to be hurt, so I don't have to do it, and my not doing it is my best answer, which he won't be able to miss. What sort of misery does he really live in, to get himself twisted quite so badly?

And then Rearden thought suddenly that he could break through Philip's chronic wretchedness for once, give him a shock of pleasure, the unexpected gratification of a hopeless desire. He thought: What do I care about the nature of his desire?—it's his, just as Rearden Metal was mine—it must mean to him what that meant to me—let's see him happy just once, it might teach him something—didn't I say that happiness is the agent of purification?—I'm celebrating tonight, so let him share in it—it will be so much for him and so little for me.

"Philip," he said, smiling, "call Miss Ives at my office tomorrow. She'll have a check for you for ten thousand dollars."

Philip stared at him blankly. It was neither shock nor pleasure. It was just the empty stare of eyes that looked glassy.

"Oh," said Philip, then added, "We'll appreciate it very much." There was no emotion in his voice, not even the simple one of greed.

Rearden could not understand his own feeling. It was as if something leaden and empty were collapsing within him. He felt both the weight and the emptiness together. He knew it was disappointment, but he wondered why it was so gray and ugly.

"It's very nice of you, Henry," Philip said dryly. "I'm surprised I didn't expect it of you."

"Don't you understand it, Phil?" said Lillian, her voice clear and jingling. "Henry's poured his metal today."

Rearden. "Shall we declare it a national holiday?"

"You're a good man, Henry" said his mother, and added "but not often enough"

Rearden stood looking at Philip as if waiting

Philip looked away then raised his eyes and held Rearden's

17
26

"I don't care about it at all I only wanted you to be happy"

But that money is not for me I am not collecting it for any personal motive I have no selfish interest in the matter whatever" His voice was cold with a note of self-conscious virtue

Rearden turned away He felt a sudden loathing not because the words were hypocrisy but because they were true Philip meant them.

By the way Henry" Philip added "do you mind if I ask you to have Miss Ives give me the money in cash? Rearden turned back to him puzzled You see Friends of Global Progress are a very progressive group and they have always maintained that you represent the blackest element of social retrogression in the country so it would embarrass us you know to have your name on our list of contributors because somebody might accuse us of being in the pay of Hank Rearden"

He wanted to slap Philip's face But an almost unendurable contempt made him close his eyes instead

"All right, he said quietly You can have it in cash"

He walked away to the farthest window of the room and stood looking at the glow of the mills in the distance

He heard Larkin's voice crying after him "Damn it Hank, you shouldn't have given it to him!

Then Lillian's voice came, cold and gay But you're wrong Paul you're so wrong What would happen to Henry's vanity if he didn't have us to throw aims at? What would become of his strength if he didn't have weaker people to dominate? What would he do with himself if he didn't keep us around as dependents? It's quite all right really I'm not crucifying him it's just a law of human nature"

She took the metal bracelet and held it up letting it glitter in the lamplight

"A chain" she said Appropriate isn't it? It's the chain by which he holds us all in bondage"

Chapter III THE TOP AND THE BOTTOM

The ceiling was that of a cellar so heavy and low that people stooped when crossing the room, as if the weight of the vaulting rested on their shoulders The circular booths of dark red leather were built into walls of stone that looked eaten by age and dampness There were no windows, only patches of blue light shooting

from dents in the masonry, the dead blue light proper for use in blackouts. The place was entered by way of narrow steps that led down, as if descending deep under the ground. This was the most expensive barroom in New York and it was built on the roof of a skyscraper.

Four men sat at a table. Raised sixty floors above the city, they did not speak loudly as one speaks from a height in the freedom of air and space, they kept their voices low, as befitted a cellar.

"Conditions and circumstances, Jim," said Orren Boyle. "Conditions and circumstances absolutely beyond human control. We had everything mapped to roll those rails, but unforeseen developments came in, which nobody could have prevented. If you'd only given me a chance, Jim."

"Disunity," drawled James Taggart, "seems to be the basic cause of all social problems. My sister has a certain influence with a certain element among our stockholders. Their disruptive tactics cannot always be defeated."

"You said it, Jim. Disunity, that's the trouble. It's my absolute opinion that in our complex industrial society, no business enterprise can succeed without sharing the burden of the problems of other enterprises."

Taggart took a sip of his drink and put it down again. "I wish they'd fire that bartender," he said.

"For instance, consider Associated Steel. We've got the most modern plant in the country and the best organization. That seems to me to be an indisputable fact, because we got the Industrial Efficiency Award of *Globe Magazine* last year. So we can maintain that we've done our best and nobody can blame us. But we cannot slip it if the iron ore situation is a national problem. We could not get the ore, Jim."

Taggart said nothing. He sat with his elbows spread wide on the table top. The table was uncomfortably small, and this made him more uncomfortable for his three companions, but they did not seem to question his privilege.

"Nobody can get ore any longer," said Boyle. "Natural exhaustion of the mines, you know, and the wearing out of equipment, and shortages of materials, and difficulties of transportation, and other unavoidable conditions."

"The ore industry is crumbling. That's what's killing the mining equipment business," said Paul Larkin.

"It's been proved that every business depends upon every other business," said Orren Boyle. "So everybody ought to share the burdens of everybody else."

"That is, I think, true," said Wesley Mouch. But nobody ever paid any attention to Wesley Mouch.

"My purpose," said Orren Boyle, "is the preservation of a free economy. It's generally conceded that free economy is now on trial. Unless it proves its social value and assumes its social responsibilities, the people won't stand for it. If it doesn't develop a profit in its done for, make no mistake about that."

Orren Boyle had announced from nowhere, five years

since made the cover of every national news magazine. He had started out with a hundred thousand dollars of his own and a two-hundred-an-enor-panies-a-chance-

"The only justification of private property," said Orrin Boyle, "is public service."

"That is, I think, indubitable," said Wesley Mouch. -- a large on was kind of

swindle "

"Uh huh," said Taggart.

"I hear there's not a single expert who's given a favorable report on it."

"No, not one."

"We've been improving steel rails for generations, and increasing their weight. Now, is it true that these Rearden Metal rails are to be lighter than the cheapest grade of steel?"

"That's right," said Taggart. "Lighter."

"But it's ridiculous, Jim. It's physically impossible. For your heavy-duty, high speed, main line track?"

"That's right."

"But you're just inviting disaster."

"My sister is."

Taggart made the stem of his glass whirl slowly between two fingers. There was a moment of silence.

"The National Council of Metal Industries," said Orrin Boyle, "passed a resolution to appoint a committee to study the question of Rearden Metal, inasmuch as its use may be an actual public hazard."

"That is, in my opinion, wise," said Wesley Mouch.

"When everybody agrees," Taggart's voice suddenly went shrill, "when people are unanimous, how does one man dare to dissent? By what right? That's what I want to know--by what right?"

Boyle's eyes darted to Taggart's face, but the dim light of the room made it impossible to see faces clearly; he saw only a pale, bluish smear.

"When we think of the natural resources, at a time of critical shortage," Boyle said softly, "when we think of the crucial raw materials that are being wasted on an irresponsible private experiment, when we think of the ore . . ."

He did not finish. He glanced at Taggart again. But Taggart seemed to know that Boyle was waiting and to find the silence enjoyable.

"The public has a vital stake in natural resources, Jim, such as -- we can't remain indifferent to reckless, selfish waste -- a trustee

Taggart glanced at Boyle and smiled, the smile was pointed, it seemed to say that something in his words was an answer to something in the words of Boyle. "The liquor they serve here is swill I suppose that's the price we have to pay for not being crowded by all kinds of rabble. But I do wish they'd recognize that they're dealing with experts. Since I hold the purse strings, I expect to get my money's worth and at my pleasure."

Boyle did not answer; his face had become sullen. "Listen, Jim . . ." he began heavily.

Taggart smiled. "What? I'm listening."

"Jim, you will agree, I'm sure, that there's nothing more destructive than a monopoly."

"Yes," said Taggart, "on the one hand. On the other, there's the blight of unbridled competition."

"That's true. That's very true. The proper course is always in my opinion, in the middle. So it is, I think, the duty of society to nip the extremes, now isn't it?"

"Yes," said Taggart, "it is."

"Consider the picture in the iron-ore business. The national output seems to be falling at an ungodly rate. It threatens the existence of the whole steel industry. Steel mills are shutting down all over the country. There's only one mining company that's lucky enough not to be affected by the general conditions. Its output seems to be plentiful and always available on schedule. But who gets the benefit of it? Nobody except its owner. Would you say that that's fair?"

"No," said Taggart, "it isn't fair."

"Most of us don't own iron mines. How can we compete with a man who's got a corner on God's natural resources? Is it any wonder that he can always deliver steel, while we have to struggle and wait and lose our customers and go out of business? Is it in the public interest to let one man destroy an entire industry?"

"No," said Taggart, "it isn't."

"It seems to me that the national policy ought to be aimed at the objective of giving everybody a chance at his fair share of iron ore, with a view toward the preservation of the industry as a whole. Don't you think so?"

"I think so."

Boyle sighed. Then he said cautiously, "But I guess there aren't many people in Washington capable of understanding a progressive social policy."

Taggart said slowly, "There are. No, not many and not easy to approach, but there are. I might speak to them."

Boyle picked up his drink and swallowed it in one gulp, as if he had heard all he had wanted to hear.

"Speaking of progressive policies, Orren," said Taggart, "might ask yourself whether at a time of transportation when so many railroads are going bankrupt and large left without rail service, whether it is in the public interest to tolerate wasteful duplication of services and the

eat-dog competition of newcomers in territories where established companies have historical priority"

"Well now" said Boyle pleasantly, "that seems to be an interesting question to consider I might discuss it with a few friends in the National Alliance of Railroads"

"Friendships" said Taggart in the tone of an idle abstraction, "are more valuable than gold" Unexpectedly, he turned to Larkin

"Yes, of course"

~~~~~

I am counting on your many friendships"

They all seemed to know why Larkin did not answer at once, his shoulders seemed to shrink down, closer to the table "If everybody could pull for a common purpose, then nobody would have to be hurt" he cried suddenly, in a tone of incongruous despair he saw Taggart watching him and added, pleading "I wish we didn't have to hurt anybody"

"That is an anti social attitude," drawled Taggart "People who are afraid to sacrifice somebody have no business talking about a common purpose"

"But I'm a student of history," said Larkin hastily "I recognize historical necessity"

"Good" said Taggart

I can't be expected to buck the trend of the whole world, can I? Larkin seemed to plead, but the plea was not addressed to anyone Can I?

"You can't, Mr Larkin" said Wesley Mouch "You and I are not to be blamed, if we—"

Larkin jerked his head away, it was almost a shudder, he could not bear to look at Mouch.

"Did you have a good time in Mexico Orren?" asked Taggart his voice suddenly loud and casual All of them seemed to know that the purpose of their meeting was accomplished and whatever they had come here to understand was understood

"Wonderful place Mexico," Boyle answered cheerfully "Very stimulating and thought provoking Their food rations are something awful though I got sick But they're working mighty hard to put their country on its feet"

"How are things down there?"

"Pretty splendid it seems to me, pretty splendid Right at the moment however they're But then, what they're aiming at in the future The People's State of Mexico has a great future They'll beat us all in a few years"

"Did you go down to the San Sebastián Mines?"

The four figures at the table sat up straighter and tighter, all of them had invested heavily in the stock of the San Sebastián Mines

Boyle did not answer at once so that his voice seemed unexpected and unnaturally loud when it burst forth "Oh, sure, certainly, that's what I wanted to see most"

"And?"

"And what?"

"How are things going?"

"Great. Great. They must certainly have the biggest deposits of  
pet on earth down inside that mountain!"

"Did they seem to be busy?"

"Never saw such a busy place in my life."

"What were they busy doing?"

"Well you know with the kind of Spic superintendent they have  
in there, I couldn't understand half of what he was talking about  
they're certainly busy."

"Any trouble of any kind?"

"Trouble? Not at San Sebastián. Its private property the last  
time I was there."

"I had dinner with the Minister of Culture and lunches with all  
rest of the boys."

"There ought to be a law against irresponsible gossip," said  
Larkin sullenly. "Let's have another drink."

He waved irritably at a waiter. There was a small bar in a dark  
corner of the room, where an old wizened bartender stood for long  
stretches of time without moving. When called upon he moved with  
attempted slowness. His job was that of servant to men's relaxa-  
tion and pleasure but his manner was that of an embittered quack  
mastering to some guilty disease.

The four men sat in silence until the waiter returned with their  
drinks. The glasses he placed on the table were four spots of faint  
blue glitter in the semi-darkness, like four feeble jets of gas flame.  
Larkin reached for his glass and smiled suddenly.

"Let's drink to the sacrifices to historical necessity," he said  
looking at Larkin.

There was a moment's pause in a lighted room it would have  
been the contest of two men holding each other's eyes here they  
were. Then Larkin nodded

"with  
tell's  
ne?"

day

"One train?"

"—is pretty measly service it seems to me and what a train!"

"I would have seen something like that in  
photographs. What did you drag it out."

don't act as if you didn't know it, just tell me what's the gas?"  
"Yes of course I knew it," said Taggart hastily "It was just  
You just happened to choose the one week when we had a little  
trouble with our motor cars."

silent He seemed preoccupied with a problem of his own When he  
rose abruptly without apology, they rose, too, accepting it as a  
command

Larkin muttered smiling too strenuously, "It was a pleasure,  
Jim A pleasure That's how great projects are born—over a drink  
with friends"

"Social reforms are slow," said Taggart coldly "It is advisable to  
be patient and cautious For the first time, he turned to Wesley  
Mouch "What I like about you, Mouch is that you don't talk  
too much"

Wesley Mouch was Rearden's Washington man

the sky sharp and straight like a raised sword In the distance  
beyond it there hung the calendar

Taggart fumbled irritably with his coat collar, buttoning it  
against the chill of the street He had not intended to go back to  
the office tonight but he had to go back He had to see his sister  
"a difficult undertaking ahead of us, Jim" Boyle was say  
ing a difficult undertaking with so many dangers and compli  
cations and so much at stake

"It all depends," James Taggart answered slowly, "on knowin  
the people who make it possible That's what has to be know  
—who makes it possible"

Dagny Taggart was nine years old when she decided that she  
would run the Taggart Transcontinental Railroad some day She  
stated it to herself when she stood alone between the rails, looking  
at the two straight lines of steel that went off into the distance as  
met in a single point What she felt was an arrogant pleasure  
the way the track cut through the woods it did not belong in the  
midst of ancient trees among green branches that hung down  
meet green brush and the lonely spears of wild flowers—but the  
it was The two steel lines were brilliant in the sun and the black  
ties were like the rungs of a ladder which she had to climb

It was not a sudden decision but only the final seal of wor  
upon something she had known long ago In unspoken understand  
ing as if bound by a vow it had never been necessary to take and  
and Eddie Willers had given themselves to the railroad from their  
first conscious days of their childhood

She felt a bored indifference toward the immediate world around her, toward other children and adults alike. She took it as a regrettable accident, to be borne patiently for a while that she happened to be imprisoned among people who were dull. She had caught a glimpse of another world and she knew that it existed somewhere, the world that had created trains, bridges, telegraph wires and signal lights winking in the night. She had to wait, she thought, and grow up to that world.

She never tried to explain why she liked the railroad. Whatever it was that others felt, she knew that this was one emotion for which they had no equivalent and no response. She felt the same emotion in school, in classes of mathematics, the only lessons she liked. She felt the excitement of solving problems, the insolent delight of taking up a challenge and disposing of it without effort, the eagerness to meet another, harder test. She felt, at the same time, a growing respect for the adversary for a science that was so clean, so strict, so luminously rational. Studying mathematics she felt, quite simply and at once, "How great that men have done this" and "How wonderful that I'm so good at it." It was the joy of admiration and of one's own ability growing together. Her feeling for the railroad was the same worship of the skill that had gone to make it, of the ingenuity of someone's clean, reasoning mind worship with a secret smile that said she would know how to make it better some day. She hung around the tracks and the round houses like a humble student, but the humility had a touch of future pride, a pride to be earned.

"You're unbearably conceited," was one of the two sentences she heard throughout her childhood, even though she never spoke of her own ability. The other sentence was "You're selfish." She asked what was meant, but never received an answer. She looked at the adults, wondering how they could imagine that she would feel guilt from an undefined accusation.

She was twelve years old when she told Eddie Wilfers that she would run the railroad when they grew up. She was fifteen when it occurred to her for the first time that women did not run railroads and that people might object. To hell with that, she thought—and never worried about it again.

She went to work for Taggart Transcontinental at the age of sixteen. Her father permitted it; he was amused and a little curious. She started as night operator at a small country station. She had to work nights for the first few years, while attending a college of engineering.

James Taggart began his career on the railroad at the same time, he was twenty-one. He started in the Department of Public Relations.

Dagny's rise among the men who operated Taggart Transcontinental was swift and uncontested. She took positions of responsibility because there was no one else to take them. There were a few rare men of talent around her, but they were becoming rarer each year. Her superiors, who held the authority, seemed afraid to exercise it, they spent their time avoiding decisions, so

people what to do and they did it At every step of her rise, she did the work long before she was granted the title It was like advancing through empty rooms Nobody opposed her, yet nobody approved of her progress

Her father seemed astonished and proud of her, but he said nothing and there was sadness in his eyes when he looked at her in the office She was twenty nine years old when he died "There has always been a Taggart to run the railroad" was the last thing he said to her He looked at her with an odd glance it had the quality of a salute and of compassion together

The controlling stock of Taggart Transcontinental was left to James Taggart He was thirty four when he became President of the railroad Dagny had expected the Board of Directors to elect him but she had never been able to understand why they did it so eagerly They talked about tradition the president had always been the eldest son of the Taggart family they elected James Taggart in the same manner as they refused to walk under a ladder, to propitiate the same kind of fear They talked about his gift of "making railroads popular his good press his Washington ability" He seemed unusually skillful at obtaining favors from the Legislature

Dagny knew nothing about the field of Washington ability or what such an ability implied But it seemed to be necessary, so she dismissed it with the thought that there were many kinds of work which were offensive yet necessary such as cleaning sewers some body had to do it and Jim seemed to like it

She had never aspired to the presidency the Operating Department was her only concern When she went out on the line oil railroad men who hated Jim said "There will always be a Taggart to run the railroad" looking at her as her father had looked She was armed against Jim by the conviction that he was not smart enough to harm the railroad too much and that she would always be able to correct whatever damage he caused

At sixteen sitting at her operator's desk watching the lighted windows of Taggart trains roll past she had thought that she had entered her kind of world In the years since she learned that she hadn't The adversary she found herself forced to fight was not worth matching or beating it was not a superior ability which she would have found honor in challenging it was ineptitude—a gray spread of cotton that seemed soft and shapeless that could offer no resistance — anything or anybody yet managed to be a barrier in her way She stood disarmed before the riddle of what made this possible She could find no answer

It was only in the first few years that she felt herself screaming silently at times for a glimpse of human ability a single glimpse of clean hard radiant competence She had fits of tormented longing for a friend or an enemy with a mind better than her own But the longing passed She had a job to do She did not have time to feel pain not often

The first step of the policy that James Taggart brought to the railroad was the construction of the San Sebastián Line Many men were responsible for it but in Dagny, one name stood written

across that venture a name that wiped out all others wherever she saw it. It stood across five years of struggle across miles of wasted track across sheets of figures that recorded the losses of Taggart Transcontinental like a red trickle from a wound which would not heal—as it stood on the ticker tape of every stock exchange left in the world—as it stood on smokestacks in the red glare of furnaces melting copper—as it stood in scandalous headlines—as it stood on parchment pages recording the nobility of the centuries—as it stood on cards attached to flowers in the bouquets of women scattered through three continents.

The name was Francisco d'Anconia.

At the age of twenty-three when he inherited his fortune Francisco d'Anconia had been famous as the copper king of the world. Now at thirty-six he was famous as the richest man and the most spectacularly worthless playboy on earth. He was the last descendant of one of the noblest families of Argentina. He owned cattle ranches coffee plantations and most of the copper mines of Chile. He owned half of South America and sundry mines scattered through the United States as small change.

When Francisco d'Anconia suddenly bought miles of bare mountains in Mexico news leaked out that he had discovered vast deposits of copper. He made no effort to sell stock in his venture; the stock was begged out of his hands and he merely chose those whom he wished to favor from among the applicants. His financial talent was called phenomenal; no one had ever beaten him in any transaction—he added to his incredible fortune with every deal he touched and every step he made when he took the trouble to make it. Those who censured him most were first to seize the chance of riding on his talent toward a share of his new wealth. James Taggart, Orren Boyle, and their friends were among the heaviest stockholders of the project which Francisco d'Anconia had named the San Sebastián Mines.

Dagny was never able to discover what influences prompted James Taggart to build a railroad branch from Texas into the wilderness of San Sebastián. It seemed likely that he did not know it himself; like a field without a windbreak he seemed open to any current and the final sum was made by chance. A few among the Directors of Taggart Transcontinental objected to the project; the company needed all its resources to rebuild the Rio Norte line; it could not do both. But James Taggart was the road's new president. It was the first year of his administration. He won.

The People's State of Mexico was eager to co-operate and signed a contract guaranteeing for two hundred years the property right of Taggart Transcontinental to its railroad line in a country where property rights were trusted. Francisco d'Anconia had obtained the same guaranty for his mines.

Dagny fought against the building of the San Sebastián Line. She fought by means of whoever would listen to her, but she was only an assistant in the Operating Department, too young with authority and nobody listened.

She was unable, then or since, to understand the motives of

who decided to build the line. Sitting as a helpless spectator, a minority member at one of the Board meetings she felt a strange evasiveness in the air of the room, in every speech, in every argument as if the real reason of their decision were never stated, but clear to everyone except herself.

They spoke about the future importance of the trade with Mexico, about a rich stream of freight, about the large revenues assured to the exclusive carrier of an inexhaustible supply of copper. They proved it by citing Francisco d'Anconia's past achievements. They did not mention any mineralogical facts about the San Sebastian Mines. Few facts were available; the information which d'Anconia had released was not very specific, but they did not seem to need facts.

They spoke at great length about the poverty of the Mexican and their desperate need of railroads. "They've never had a chance. It is our duty to help an underprivileged nation to develop. / country it seems to me is its neighbors' keeper."

She sat listening and she thought of the many branch lines which Taggart Transcontinental had had to abandon, the revenues of the great railroad had been falling slowly for many years. She thought of the ominous need of repairs, ominously neglected over the entire system. Their policy on the problem of maintenance was not a policy but a game they seemed to be playing with a piece of rubber that could be stretched a little, then a little more.

The Mexicans it seems to me, are a very diligent people, crushed by their primitive economy. How can they become industrialized if nobody lends them a hand?" "When considering an investment we should in my opinion take a chance on human beings, rather than on purely material factors."

She thought of an engine that lay in a ditch beside the Rio Norte Line, because a splice bar had cracked. She thought of the five days when all traffic was stopped on the Rio Norte Line, because a retaining wall had collapsed pouring tons of rock across the track.

"Since a man must think of the good of his brothers before he thinks of his own it seems to me that a nation must think of its neighbors before it thinks of itself."

She thought of a newcomer called Ellis Wyatt whom people were beginning to watch because his activity was the first trickle of a torrent of goods about to burst from the dying stretches of Colorado. The Rio Norte Line was being allowed to run its way to final collapse, just when its fullest efficiency was about to be needed and used.

"Material greed isn't everything. There are non-material ideals to consider." "I confess to a feeling of shame when I think that I own a huge network of railways, while the Mexican people have nothing but one or two inadequate lines." "The old theory of economic self-interest has been proven false."

She thought of it was available

They spoke also at the same session, in the same speeches about the efficiency of the Mexican government that held complete control of everything Mexico had a great future they said and would become a dangerous competitor in a few years "Mexico's got discipline the men of the Board kept saying with a note of envy in their voices

James Taggart let it be understood—in unfinished sentences and undefined hints—that his friends in Washington whom he never named wished to see a railroad line built in Mexico that such a line would be of great help in matters of international diplomacy that the good will of the public opinion of the world would more than repay Taggart Transcontinental for its investment.

They voted to build the San Sebastian Line at a cost of thirty million dollars

When Dagny left the Board room and walked through the clean cold air of the streets she heard two words repeated clearly insistently in the numbed emptiness of her mind Get out Get out

She listened aghast. The thought of leaving Taggart Transcontinental did not belong among the things she could hold as conceivable She felt terror not at the thought but at the question of what had made her think it She shook her head angrily she told herself that Taggart Transcontinental would now need her more than ever

Two of the Directors resigned so did the Vice President in Charge of Operation He was replaced by a friend of James Taggart.

Steel rail was laid across the Mexican desert—while orders were issued to reduce the speed of trains on the Rio Norte Line because the track was shot A depot of reinforced concrete with marble columns and mirrors was built amidst the dust of an unpaved square in a Mexican village—while a train of tank cars carrying oil went hurtling down an embankment and into a blazing junk pile because a rail had split on the Rio Norte Line Ellis Wyatt did not wait for the court to decide whether the accident was an act of God or of his oil

small and  
sent the

Wyatt Oil grew as factories grew in nearby valleys—as a band of rails and ties grew at the rate of two miles a month across the scraggly fields of Mexican corn

Dagny was thirty-two years old when she told James Taggart that she would resign She had run the Operating Department for the past three years without title credit or authority She was defeated by loathing for the hours the days the nights she had in waste circumventing the interference of Jim's friend who bore the title of Vice President in Charge of Operation The man had no policy and any decision he made was always hers but he made it only after he had made every effort to make it impossible she delivered to her brother was an ultimatum He Dagny you are a woman as Operating



"It's unheard of! The Board won't consider it!" "Then I'm through," she answered.

She did not think of what she would do with the rest of her life. To face leaving Taggart Transcontinental was like waiting to have her legs amputated, she thought she would let it happen, then take up the load of whatever was left.

She never understood why the Board of Directors voted unanimously to make her Vice-President in Charge of Operation.

It was she who finally gave them their San Sebastián Line. When she took over, the construction had been under way for three years, one third of its track was laid, the cost to date was beyond the authorized total. She fired Jim's friends and found a contractor who completed the job in one year.

The San Sebastián Line was now in operation. No surge of trade had come across the border, nor any trains loaded with copper. A few carloads came clattering down the mountains from San Sebastián, at long intervals. The mines, said Francisco d'Anconia, were still in the process of development. The drain on Taggart Transcontinental had not stopped.

Now she sat at the desk in her office, as she had sat for many evenings, trying to work out the problem of what branches could save the system and in how many years.

The Rio Norte Line, when rebuilt, would redeem the rest. As she looked at the sheets of figures announcing losses and more losses she did not think of the long, senseless agony of the Mexican venture. She thought of a telephone call. "Hank, can you save us? Can you give us rail on the shortest notice and the longest credit possible?" A quiet, steady voice had answered, "Sure."

The thought was a point of support. She leaned over the sheets of paper on her desk, finding it suddenly easier to concentrate. There was one thing, at least, that could be counted upon not to crumble when needed.

James Taggart crossed the anteroom of Dagny's office, still holding the kind of confidence he had felt among his companions at the barroom half an hour ago. When he opened her door, the confidence vanished. He crossed the room to her desk like a child being dragged to punishment, storing the resentment for all his future years.

He saw a head bent over sheets of paper, the light of the desk lamp glistening on strands of disheveled hair, a white shirt clinging to her shoulders, its loose folds suggesting the thinness of her body.

"What is it, Jim?"

"What are you trying to pull on the San Sebastián Line?"

She raised her head. "Pull? Why?"

"What sort of schedule are we running down there and what kind of trains?"

She laughed, the sound was gay and a little weary. "You really ought to read the reports sent to the president's office, Jim, once in a while."

"What do you mean?"

"We've been running that schedule and those trains on the San Sebastián for the last three months."

"One passenger train a day?"

"—in the morning And one freight train every other night."

"Good God! On an important branch like that?"

"The important branch can't pay even for those two trains."

"But the Mexican people expect real service from us!"

"I'm sure they do."

"They need trains!"

"For what?"

"For . . . To help them develop local industries How do you expect them to develop if we don't give them transportation?"

"I don't expect them to develop."

"That's just your personal opinion I don't see what right you had to take it upon yourself to cut our schedules Why, the copper traffic alone will pay for everything."

"When?"

He looked at her, his face assumed the satisfaction of a person about to utter something that has the power to hurt. "You don't doubt the success of those copper mines, do you?—when it's Francisco d'Anconia who's running them?" He stressed the name, watching her.

She said, "He may be your friend, but—"

"My friend? I thought he was *yours*."

She said steadily, "Not for the last ten years."

"The . . . the smartest operators  
mean, a *business* venture  
y into those mines, so

"When will you realize that Francisco d'Anconia has turned into a worthless bum?"

He chuckled "I always thought that that's what he was—as far as his personal character is concerned But you didn't share my opinion Yours was opposite. Oh my, how opposite! Surely you remember our quarrels on the subject? Shall I quote some of the things you said about him? I can only surmise as to some of the things you did."

"Do you wish to discuss Francisco d'Anconia? Is that what you came here for?"

His face showed the anger of failure—because hers showed nothing. "You know damn well what I came here for!" he snapped "I've heard some incredible things about our trains in Mexico."

"What things?"

"What sort of rolling stock are you using down there?"

"The worst I could find."

"You admit that?"

"I've stated it on paper in the reports I sent you."

"Is it true that you're using wood burning locomotives?"

"Eddie found them for me in somebody's abandoned roundhouse down in Louisiana. He couldn't even learn the name of the railroad."

"And that's what you're running as Taggart trains?"

"Yes."

'What in hell's the big idea? What's going on? I want to know what's going on!'

She spoke evenly looking straight at him. "If you want to know, I have left nothing but junk on the San Sebastián Line, and as little of that as possible. I have moved everything that could be moved—switch engines, shop tools, even typewriters and mirrors—out of Mexico."

'Why in blazes?'

"So that the looters won't have too much to loot when they nationalize the line."

He leaped to his feet "You won't get away with that! This is one time you won't get away with it! To have the nerve to pull such a low unspeakable . . . just because of some vicious rumors, when we have a contract for two hundred years and "

Jim" she said slowly, "there's not a car, engine or ton of coal that we can spare anywhere on the system."

I won't permit it. I absolutely won't permit such an outrageous policy toward a friendly people who need our help. Material greed isn't everything. After all, there are non-material considerations, even though you wouldn't understand them!<sup>17</sup>

She pulled a pad forward and picked up a pencil. "All right, Jim. How many trains do you wish me to run on the San Sebastian Line?"

"Hub?"

"Which runs do you wish me to cut and on which of our lines—in order to get the Diesels and the steel coaches?"

"I don't want you to cut any runs!"

"Then where do I get the equipment for Mexico?"

"That's for you to figure out. It's your job."

"I am not able to do it. You will have to decide."

"That's your usual rotten trick—switching the responsibility to me!"

"I'm waiting for orders, Jim."

MT - - - - -

Sebastián schedule will

decision, once and for all, on how far the Operating Department is to be permitted to exceed its authority. You're going to have to answer for this."

"I'll answer for it."

She was back at her work before the door had closed on James Taggart.

When she had - let it be - " " I glanced up, the

- I become a glow-rose reluctantly

she was, tonight if she knew that

The state office was dark and empty, her staff had gone. Only

ddie Willers was still there, at his desk in his glass partitioned enclosure that looked like a cube of light in a corner of the large room. She waved to him on her way out.

She did not take the elevator to the lobby of the building but to a concourse of the Taggart Terminal. She liked to walk through on her way home.

She had always felt that the concourse looked like a temple, gazing up at the distant ceiling, she saw dim vaults supported by giant granite columns, and the tops of vast windows glazed by darkness. The vaulting held the solemn peace of a cathedral, spread its protection high above the rushing activity of men.

Dominating the concourse, but ignored by the travelers as a habitual sight, stood a statue of Nathaniel Taggart, the founder of the railroad. Dagny was the only one who remained aware of it and had never been able to take it for granted. To look at that statue whenever she crossed the concourse, was the only form of prayer she knew.

Nathaniel Taggart had been a penniless adventurer who had come from somewhere in New England and built a railroad across a continent, in the days of the first steel rails. His railroad still stood in battle to build it had dissolved into a legend because people referred not to understand it or to believe it possible.

He was a man who had never accepted the creed that others had the right to stop him. He set his goal and moved toward it, in a way as straight as one of his rails. He never sought any loans, bonds, subsidies, land grants or legislative favors from the government. He obtained money from the men who owned it, going from door to door—from the mahogany doors of bankers to the clapboard doors of lonely farmhouses. He never talked about the public good. He merely told people that they would make big profits on a railroad, he told them why he expected the profits and he gave his reasons. He had good reasons. Through all the generations that followed, Taggart Transcontinental was one of the few railroads that never went bankrupt and the only one whose controlling stock remained in the hands of the founder's descendants.

In his lifetime, the name "Nat Taggart" was not famous, but notorious, it was repeated, not in homage, but in resentful curiosity, and if anyone admired him it was as one admires a successful bandit. Yet no penny of his wealth had been obtained by force or fraud. He was guilty of nothing except that he earned his own fortune and never forgot that it was his.

Many stories were whispered about him. It was said that in the wilderness of the Middle West, he murdered a state legislator who

he had no trouble with legislators from then on.

It was said that Nat Taggart had staked his life on his many times, but once, he staked more than his life. For

line suspended, he threw

three flights of stairs a distinguished gentleman who offered him a loan from the government. Then he pledged his wife as security for a loan from a millionaire who hated him and admired her beauty. He repaid the loan on time and did not have to surrender his pledge. The deal had been made with his wife's consent. She was a great beauty from the noblest family of a southern state and she had been disinherited by her family because she eloped with Nat Taggart when he was only a ragged young adventurer.

Dagny regretted at times that Nat Taggart was her ancestor. What she felt for him did not belong in the category of unchosen family affections. She did not want her feeling to be the thing one was supposed to owe an uncle or a grandfather. She was incapable of love for any object not of her own choice and she resented anyone's demand for it. But had it been possible to choose an ancestor, she would have chosen Nat Taggart, in voluntary homage and with all of her gratitude.

Nat Taggart's statue was copied from an artist's sketch of him, the only record ever made of his appearance. He had lived far into old age but one could never think of him except as he was on that sketch—as a young man. In her childhood, his statue had been Dagny's first concept of the exalted. When she was sent to church or to school and heard people using that word, she thought that she knew what they meant—she thought of the statue.

The statue was of a young man with a tall, gaunt body and an angular face. He held his head as if he faced a challenge and found joy in his capacity to meet it. All that Dagny wanted of life was contained in the desire to hold her head as he did.

Tonight, she looked at the statue when she walked across the concourse. It was a moment's rest, it was as if a burden she could not name were lightened and as if a faint current of air were touching her forehead.

In a corner of the concourse, by the main entrance, there was a small newsstand. The owner, a quiet, courteous old man with an air of breeding, had stood behind his counter for twenty years. He had owned a cigarette factory once, but it had gone bankrupt, and he had resigned himself to the lonely obscurity of his little stand in the midst of an eternal whirlpool of strangers. He had no family or friends left alive. He had a hobby which was his only pleasure. He gathered cigarettes from all over the world for his private collection; he knew every brand made or that had ever been made.

Dagny liked to stop at his newsstand on her way out. He seemed to be part of the Taggart Terminal like an old watchdog too feeble to protect it, but reassuring by the loyalty of his presence. He liked to see her coming because it amused him to think that he alone knew the importance of the young woman in a sports coat and a slanting hat, who came hurrying anonymously through the crowd.

She stopped tonight, as usual, to buy a package of cigarettes. "How is the collection?" she asked him. "Any new specimens?"

He smiled sadly, shaking his head. "No, Miss Taggart. There aren't any new brands made anywhere in the world. Even the old ones are going, one after another. There's only one left now."

left selling now There used to be dozens People aren't making anything new any more "

"They will That's only temporary "

He glanced at her and did not answer Then he said, "I like cigarettes Miss Taggart. I like to think of fire held in a man's hand Fire, a dangerous force, tamed at his fingertips I often wonder about the hours when a man sits alone watching the smoke in a cigarette, thinking I wonder what great things have come from such hours When a man thinks, there is a spot of fire alive in his mind—and it is proper that he should have the burning point of a cigarette as his one expression "

"Do they ever think?" she asked involuntarily, and stopped the question was her one personal torture and she did not want to discuss it.

The old man looked as if he had noticed the sudden stop and understood it, but he did not start discussing it he said instead. "I don't like the thing that's happening to people, Miss Taggart "

"What?"

"I don't know But I've watched them here for twenty years and I've seen the change They used to rush through here and it was wonderful to watch, it was the hurry of men who knew where they were going and were eager to get there Now they're hurrying because they are afraid. It's not a purpose that drives them it's fear They're not going anywhere they're escaping And I don't think they know what it is that they want to escape They don't ask one another They jerk when brushed against They smile so much, but it's an ugly kind of smiling it's not joy it's pleading don't know what it is that's happening to the world " He shrugged Oh well, who is John Galt?"

"He's just a meaningless phrase!"

She was startled by the sharpness of her own voice, and she added in apology, "I don't like that empty piece of slang What does it mean? Where did it come from?"

"Nobody knows," he answered slowly

"Why do people keep saying it? Nobody seems able to explain just what it stands for, yet they all use it as if they knew the meaning "

"Why does it disturb you?" he asked

"I don't like what they seem to mean when they say it."

"I don't, either, Miss Taggart."

Eddie Willers ate his dinners in the employees' cafeteria of the Taggart Terminal There was a restaurant in the building patroned by Taggart executives but he did not like it. The cafeteria

with walls  
lights and  
C  
of glass and chromium a sense of space and light  
There was a railroad worker whom Eddie Willers  
in the cafeteria, Eddie liked his face They had been

a chance conversation once, and then it became their habit to dine together whenever they happened to meet.

Eddie had forgotten whether he had ever asked the worker's name or the nature of his job, he supposed that the job wasn't much, because the man's clothes were rough and grease-stained. The man was not a person to him, but only a silent presence with an enormous intensity of interest in the one thing which was the meaning of his own life in Taggart Transcontinental.

Tonight, coming down late, Eddie saw the worker at a table in a corner of the half-deserted room. Eddie smiled happily, waving at him, and carried his tray of food to the worker's table.

In the privacy of their corner, Eddie felt at ease, relaxing after the long strain of the day. He could talk as he did not talk anywhere else—admitting things he would not confess to anyone, thinking aloud, looking into the attentive eyes of the worker across the table.

"The Rio Norte Line is our last hope," said Eddie Willers. "But it will save us. We'll have at least one branch in good condition, where it's needed most, and that will help to save the rest . . . It's funny—ain't it?—to speak about a last hope for Taggart Transcontinental. Do you take it seriously if somebody tells you that a meteor is going to destroy the earth? . . . I don't, either. . . . 'From Ocean to Ocean, forever'—that's what we heard all through our childhood, she and I. No, they didn't say 'forever,' but that's what it meant. . . . You know, I'm not any kind of a great man."

me to stay, but there was a light under her door, long after all the others had gone. Yes, she's gone home now . . . Trouble? Oh, there's always trouble in the office. But she's not worried. She knows she can pull us through . . . Of course, it's bad. We're having many more accidents than you hear about. We lost two Diesels again, last week. One—just from old age, the other—in a head-on collision. Yes, we have Diesels on order, at the United Locomotive Works, but we've waited for them for two years. I don't know whether we'll ever get them or not . . . God, do we need them! Motive power—you can't imagine how important that is. That's the heart of everything . . . What are you smiling at? . . . Well, as I was saying, it's bad. But at least the Rio Norte Line is set. The first shipment of rail will get to the site in a few weeks. In a year, we'll run the first train on the new track. Nothing's going to stop us, this time. . . . Sure, I know who's going to lay the rail. McNamara, of Cleveland. He's the contractor who finished the San Sebastián Line for us. There, at least, is one man who knows his job. So we're safe. We can count on him. There aren't many good contractors left . . . We're rushed as hell, but I like it. I've been coming to the office an hour earlier than usual, but she beats me at it. She's always there first . . . What? . . . I don't know what she does at night. Nothing much, I guess.

No she never goes out with anyone She sits at home mostly and listens to music She plays records What do you care which records? Richard Halley She loves the music of Richard Halley Outside the railroad, that's the only thing she loves "

## Chapter IV THE IMMOVABLE MOVERS

Motive power—thought Dagny looking up at the Taggart Building in the twilight—was its first need motive power to keep that building standing movement, to keep it immovable It did not rest on piles driven into granite it rested on the engines that rolled across a continent.

She felt a dim touch of anxiety She was back from a trip to the plant of the United Locomotive Works in New Jersey where she had gone to see the president of the company in person She had learned nothing neither the reason for the delays nor any indication of the date when the Diesel engines would be produced. The president of the company had talked to her for two hours But none of his answers had connected to any of her questions His manner had conveyed a peculiar note of condescending reproach whenever she attempted to make the conversation specific as if she were giving proof of ill breeding by breaking some unwritten code known to everyone else

On her way through the plant, she had seen an enormous piece of machinery left abandoned in a corner of the yard It had been a precision machine tool once, long ago of a kind that could not be bought anywhere now It had not been worn out it had been rotted by neglect, eaten by rust and the black drippings of a dirty oil She had turned her face away from it. A sight of that nature always blinded her for an instant by the burst of too violent an anger She did not know why she could not define her own feeling she knew only that there was in her feeling, a scream of protest against injustice, and that it was a response to something much beyond an old piece of machinery

The rest of her staff had gone when she entered the anteroom of her office, but Eddie Willers was still there waiting for her She knew at once that something had happened by the way he looked and the way he followed her silently into her office.

"What's the matter Eddie?"

"McNamara quit."

She looked at him blankly "What do you mean, quit?"

"Left. Retired. Went out of business."

"McNamara, our contractor?"

"Yes."

"But that's impossible!"

"I know it."

"What happened? Why?"

"Nobody knows."

Taking her time deliberately she unbuttoned at her desk, started to pull off her gloves Then she



at the beginning, Eddie Sit down."

He spoke quietly but he remained standing. I talked to his chief engineer long distance. The chief engineer called from Cleveland, to tell us That's all he said. He knew nothing else.

What did he say?

"That McNamara has closed his business and gone."

"Where?"

He doesn't know. Nobody knows."

She noticed that she was holding with one hand two empty fingers of the glove of the other the glove half removed and forgotten. She pulled it off and dropped it on the desk.

Eddie said. He's walked out on a pile of contracts that are worth a fortune. He had a waiting list of clients for the next three years. "She said nothing. He added, his voice low, "I wouldn't be frightened if I could understand it. But a thing that can't have any possible reason. She remained silent. "He was the best contractor in the country."

They looked at each other. What she wanted to say was. Oh God Eddie! Instead her voice even she said, Don't worry. We'll find another contractor for the Rio Norte Line."

It was late when she left her office. Outside on the sidewalk at the door of the building she paused looking at the streets. She felt suddenly empty of energy of purpose of desire, as if a motor had crackled and stopped.

A faint glow streamed from behind the buildings into the sky, the reflection of thousands of unknown lights the electric breath of the city. She wanted to rest. To rest she thought and to find enjoyment somewhere.

Her work was all she had or wanted. But there were times like tonight, when she felt that sudden peculiar emptiness which was not emptiness but silence not despair but immobility as if nothing within her were destroyed but everything stood still. Then she felt the wish to find a moment's joy outside the wish to be held as a passive spectator by some work or sight of greatness. Not to make it, she thought, but to accept not to begin, but to respond not to create but to admire. I need it to let me go on she thought, because joy is one's fuel.

She had always been—she closed her eyes with a faint smile of amusement and pain—the motive power of her own happiness. For once she wanted to feel herself carried by the power of someone.

ing a single glimpse just to wave her arm and say: Someone is going somewhere.

She started walking slowly her hands in the pockets of her coat, the shadow of her slanting hat brim across her face. The buildings around her rose to such heights that her glance could not find the sky. She thought. It has taken so much to build this city, it should have so much to offer.

Above the door of a shop, the black hole of a radio loudspeaker was hurling sounds at the streets. They were the sounds of a symphony concert being given somewhere in the city. They were a long screech without shape, as of cloth and flesh being torn at random. They scattered with no melody, no harmony, no rhythm to hold them. If music was emotion and emotion came from thought,

The  
ickets,  
" said  
a placard "The penetrating study of a businessman's greed. A fearless revelation of man's depravity."

She walked past a movie theater. Its lights wiped out half a block, leaving only a huge photograph and some letters suspended in blazing mid air. The photograph was of a smiling young woman, looking at her face, one felt the weariness of having seen it for years even while seeing it for the first time. The letters said "in a momentous drama giving the answer to the great problem. Should a woman tell?"

She walked past the door of a night club. A couple came staggering out to a taxicab. The girl had blurred eyes, a perspiring face, "aling too  
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her naked  
cipating a  
write ob-

on These  
of their  
anywhere,  
for many years

At the corner of the street where she lived, she bought a newspaper and went home.

Her apartment was two rooms on the top floor of a skyscraper. The sheets of glass in the corner window of her living room made it look like the prow of a ship in motion, and the lights of the city were like phosphorescent sparks on the black waves of steel and bronze. When she turned on a lamp, long triangles of shadow cut the bare walls in a geometrical pattern of light rays broken by a few angular pieces of furniture.

She stood in the middle of the room, alone between sky and city. There was only one thing that could give her the feeling she wanted to experience tonight, it was the only form of enjoyment she had found. She turned to a phonograph and put on a record of

st work he had written. The  
ie sights of the streets away  
reat cry of rebellion. It was a  
rture, a denial of suffering a

denial were li  
in the  
sity?—  
ment have we been sentenced for it, and by whom? . . . The sounds of torture became defiance the statement of agony became a hymn to a distant vision for whose sake anything was worth enduring even this It was the song of rebellion—and of a desperate quest

She sat still, her eyes closed, listening

No one knew what had happened to Richard Halley, or why The story of his life had been like a summary written to damn greatness by showing the price one pays for it It had been a procession of years spent in garrets and basements, years that had taken the gray tinge of the walls imprisoning a man whose music overflowed with violent color It had been the gray of a struggle against long flights of unlighted tenement stairs, against frozen plumbing against the price of a sandwich in an ill-smelling delicatessen store against the faces of men who listened to music, the eyes empty It had been a struggle without the relief of violence without the recognition of finding a conscious enemy, with only a deaf wall to batter a wall of the most effective soundproofing difference, that swallowed blows chords and screams—a battle in silence for a man who could give to sounds a greater eloquence than they had ever carried—the silence of obscurity, of loneliness the nights when some rare orchestra played one of his works as he looked at the darkness knowing that his soul went in trembling widening circles from a radio tower through the air of the city but there were no receivers tuned to hear it.

"The music of Richard Halley has a quality of the heroic. Our age has outgrown that stuff" said one critic "The music of Richard Halley is out of key with our times. It has a tone of ecstasy. We care for ecstasy nowadays?" said another

His life had been a summary of the lives of all the men who reward is a monument in a public park a hundred years after the time when a reward can matter—except that Richard Halley could not die soon enough He lived to see the night which, by the accepted laws of history he was not supposed to see He was for three years old and it was the opening night of *Phaethon* an opera he had written at the age of twenty-four He had changed

ceeded The opera had been performed then, nineteen years

On the night when the opera was presented again, nineteen years later, the last sounds of the music crashed into the sounds of

greatest ovation the opera house had ever heard The ancient walls could not contain it, the sounds of cheering burst through to the lobbies, to the stairs to the streets to the boy who had walked those streets nineteen years ago

Dagny was in the audience on the night of the ovation. She was one of the few who had known the music of Richard Halley much earlier but she had never seen him She saw him being pushed out

staring at a question

"The music of Richard Halley" wrote a critic next morning "belongs to mankind It is the product and the expression of the greatness of the people" "There is an inspiring lesson," said a minister "in the life of Richard Halley He has had a terrible struggle, but what does that matter? It is proper it is noble that he should have endured suffering injustice abuse at the hands of his brothers—in order to enrich their lives and teach them to appreciate the beauty of great music"

On the day after the opening, Richard Halley retired. He gave no explanation He merely told his publishers that his career was over He sold them the rights to his works for a modest sum, even though he knew that his royalties would now bring him fortune He went away leaving no address It was eight years ago no one had seen him since

Dagny listened to the Fourth Concerto her head thrown back, eyes closed She lay half-stretched across the corner of a couch, her body relaxed and still but tension stressed the shape of her mouth on her motionless face a sensual shape drawn in lines of longing

After a while she opened her eyes She noticed the newspaper he had thrown down on the couch She reached for it absently, to turn the vivid headlines out of sight The paper fell open She saw the photograph of a face she knew and the heading of a story which said that

ling said that  
"It She would

She sat looking down at the newspaper on the floor Don't read it, she thought don't look at it But the face she thought, had not changed How could a face remain the same when everything else was gone? She wished they had not caught a picture of him when he smiled. That kind of smile did not belong in the pages of a newspaper It was the smile of a man who is able to see and know and to create the glory of existence It was the mocking challenging smile of a brilliant intelligence Don't read it she thought not now—not to that music—oh, not to that music!

She reached for the paper and opened it. The story said that Senor Francisco d'Anconia had granted an interview to the press in his suite at the Wayne Falkland Hotel

He said that he had come to New York for two important reasons a hat-check girl at the Cub Club, and the liverwurst at Moe's Delicatessen on Third Avenue. He had nothing to say about the coming divorce trial of Mr and Mrs Gilbert Vail. Mrs. Vail, a lady of noble breeding and unusual loveliness, had taken a shot at her distinguished young husband, some months ago, publicly declaring that she wished to get rid of him for the sake of her lover, Francisco d'Anconia. She had given to the press a detailed account of her secret romance, including a description of the night of last New Year's Eve which she had spent at d'Anconia's villa in the Andes. Her husband had survived the shot and had sued for divorce. She had countered with a suit for half of her husband's millions, and with a recital of his private life which, she said, made hers look innocent. All of that had been splashed over the newspapers for weeks. But Señor d'Anconia had nothing to say about

of the scandal was about to explode on the front pages. But they

down to her knees, trembled in sudden jolts once in a while.

The great chords of Halley's music went on, filling the room, piercing the glass of the windows, streaming out over the city. She was hearing the music. It was *her* quest, her cry.

James Taggart glanced about the living room of his apartment, wondering what time it was, he did not feel like moving to find his watch. He sat in an armchair, dressed in wrinkled pajamas, barefooted, it was too much trouble to look for his slippers. The light of the gray sky in the windows hurt his eyes, still sticky with sleep. He felt, inside his skull, the nasty heaviness which is about to become a headache. He wondered angrily why he had stumbled out into the living room. Oh yes, he remembered, to look for the time.

He slumped sideways over the arm of the chair and caught sigh

awful in a negligee, thought Taggart she was ever so much better in a riding habit, in the photographs on the society pages of the newspapers. She was a lanky girl, all bones and loose joints that did not move smoothly. She had a homely face, a bad complexion and a look of impertinent condescension derived from the fact that she belonged to one of the very best families.

"Aw, hell!" she said at nothing in particular stretching herself to limber up. "Jim, where are your nail clippers? I've got to trim my toenails."

"I don't know. I have a headache. Do it at home."

"You look unappetizing in the morning," she said indifferently. "You look like a snail."

"Why don't you shut up?"

She wandered aimlessly about the room. "I don't want to go home," she said with no particular feeling. "I hate morning. Here's another day and nothing to do. I've got a tea session on for this after-

"Are you through in the bathroom?" he asked. "I have to dress. I have an important engagement today."

"Go right in. I don't mind. I'll share the bathroom with you. I hate to be rushed."

While he shaved, he saw her dressing in front of the open bathroom door. She took a long time twisting herself into her girdle, hooking garters to her stockings, pulling on an ungainly, expensive tweed suit. The harlequin negligee, picked from an advertisement in the smartest fashion magazine, was like a uniform which she knew to be expected on certain occasions, which she had worn dutifully for a specified purpose and then discarded.

The nature of their relationship had the same quality. There was no passion in it, no desire, no actual pleasure, not even a sense of shame. To them, the act of sex was neither joy nor sin. It meant nothing. They had heard that men and women were supposed to sleep together, so they did.

"Jim, why don't you take me to the Armenian restaurant tonight?" she asked. "I love shush kebab."

"I can't," he answered angrily through the soap lather on his face. "I've got a busy day ahead."

"Why don't you cancel it?"

"What?"

"Whatever it is."

"It is very important, my dear. It is a meeting of our Board of Directors."

"Oh, don't be stuffy about your damn railroad. It's boring. I hate businessmen. They're dull."

He did not answer.

She glanced at him slyly and her voice acquired a livelier note when she drawled, "Jock Benson said that you have a soft snap on

that railroad anyway because it's your sister who runs the whole works

"Oh he did did he?"

"I think that your sister is awful I think it's disgusting—a woman acting like a grease monkey and posing around like a big executive."

he door  
ace, sar  
ion.  
a putting

No? she said interested "Really?"

-ly put her in

he

"No no You wouldn't understand It's merely that she's gone too far for once and she's going to get slapped down She's pulled an inexcusable sort of stunt without consulting anybody It's a serious offense against our Mexican neighbors When the Board

the washbowl adding cheerfully "Maybe I will take you out to night and buy you some shush kebab"

The telephone rang

He lifted the receiver The operator announced a long-distance call from Mexico City

The hysterical voice that came on the wire was that of his political man in Mexico

"I couldn't help it, Jim!" it gulped I couldn't help it! W had no warning I swear to God nobody suspected nobody saw

and therefore, I can assure the gentlemen of the Board that there is no occasion for panic The event of this morning is a regrettable development, but I have full confidence—based on my knowledge of the inner processes shaping our foreign policy in Washington—that our government will negotiate an equitable settlement with the government of the People's State of Mexico and that we will receive full and just compensation for our property"

James Taggart stood at the long table addressing the Board of Directors His voice was precise and monotonous, it connoted safety

"I am glad to report however that I foresaw the possibility of such a turn of events and took every precaution to protect the

shall have the exact figures computed and submit them to you. I

ton, our economic consultant, who recommended the construction of the San Sebastián Line, and of Mr Jules Mott, our representative in Mexico City."

The men sat around the long table, listening. They did not think of what they would have to do, but of what they would have to say to the men they represented. Taggart's speech gave them what they needed.

Orren Boyle was waiting for him, when Taggart returned to his office. Once they were alone, Taggart's manner changed. He leaned against the desk, sagging, his face loose and white.

"Well?" he asked.

Boyle spread his hands out helplessly. "I've checked, Jim," he said. "It's straight all right. d'Anconia's lost fifteen million dollars of his own money in those mines. No, there wasn't anything phony about that, he didn't pull any sort of trick, he put up his own cash and now he's lost it."

He's too smart

"I sure hope so."

"He's outwitted some of the slickest combinations of money-grubbers on earth. Is he going to be taken by a bunch of Greaser politicians with a decree? He must have something on them, and he'll get the last word, and we must be sure to be in on it, too!"

"That's up to you, Jim. You're his friend."

"Friend be damned! I hate his guts."

He pressed a button for his secretary. The secretary entered uncertainly, looking unhappy, he was a young man, no longer too young, with a bloodless face and the well bred manner of genteel poverty.

"Did you get me an appointment with Francisco d'Anconia?" snapped Taggart.

"No, sir."

"But, God damn it, I told you to call the—"

"I wasn't able to, sir. I have tried."

"Well, try again."

"I mean I wasn't able to obtain the appointment, Mr.,"



Why not?

"He declined it"

You mean he refused to see me?"

Yes sir that is what I mean"

"He wouldn't see me?"

"No sir he wouldn't"

"Did you speak to him in person?"

"No sir I spoke to his secretary"

"What did he tell you? Just what did he say? The young man hesitated and looked more unhappy. What did he say?"

"He said that Senor d'Anconia said that you bore him, Mr Taggart"

The proposal which they passed was known as the "Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule". When they voted for it the members of the National Alliance of Railroads sat in a large hall in the deepening twilight of a late autumn evening and did not look at one another.

The National Alliance of Railroads was an organization formed it was claimed to protect the welfare of the railroad industry. This was to be achieved by developing methods of co-operation for a common purpose; this was to be achieved by the pledge of every member to subordinate his own interests to those of the industry as a whole; the interests of the industry as a whole were to be determined by a majority vote and every member was committed to abide by any decision the majority chose to make.

"Members of the same profession or of the same industry should stick together," the organizers of the Alliance had said. "We all have the same problems, the same interests, the same enemies. We waste our energy fighting one another instead of presenting a common front to the world. We can all grow and prosper together if we pool our efforts." "Against whom is this Alliance being organized?" a skeptic had asked. The answer had been "Why, its not against anybody. But if you want to put it that way, why its against shippers or supply manufacturers or anyone who might try to take advantage of us. Against whom is any union organized?" "That's what I wonder about," the skeptic had said.

When the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule was offered to the vote of the full membership of the National Alliance of Railroads at its annual meeting, it was the first mention of this Rule in public. But all the members had heard of it. It had been discussed privately for a long time and more insistently in the last few months. The men who sat in the large hall of the meeting were the presidents of the railroads. They did not like the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule; they had hoped it would never be brought up. But when it was brought up they voted for it.

No railroad was mentioned by name in the speeches that preceded the voting. The speeches dealt only with the public welfare. It was said that while the public welfare was threatened by shortages of transportation, railroads were destroying one another through vicious competition on "the brutal policy of dog-eat-dog." While there existed blighted areas where rail service had been discon-

tinued, there existed at the same time large regions where two or more railroads were competing for a traffic barely sufficient for one. It was said that there were great opportunities for younger railroads in the blighted areas. While it was true that such areas offered little economic incentive at present, a public spirited railroad, it was said, would undertake to provide transportation for the struggling inhabitants, since the prime purpose of a railroad was public service, not profit.

Then it was said that large, established railroad systems were essential to the public welfare, and that the collapse of one of them would be a national catastrophe and that if one such system had happened to sustain a crushing loss in a public spirited attempt to contribute to international good will, it was entitled to public support to help it survive the blow.

No railroad was mentioned by name. But when the chairman of the meeting raised his hand, as a solemn signal that they were about to vote, everybody looked at Dan Conway, president of the Phoenix Durango.

There were only five dissenters who voted against it. Yet when the chairman announced that the measure had passed, there was no cheering, no sounds of approval, no movement, nothing but a heavy silence. To the last minute every one of them had hoped that someone would save them from it.

The Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule was described as a measure of voluntary self-regulation intended the better to enforce the law long since passed by the country's Legislature. The Rule provided that the members of the National Alliance of Railroads were forbidden to engage in practices defined as "destructive competition", that in regions declared to be restricted no more than one railroad would be permitted to operate, that in such regions seniority belonged to the oldest railroad now operating there and that the newcomers, who had encroached unfairly upon its territory, would suspend operations within nine months after being ordered that the Executive Board of the National Alliance of Railroads was empowered to decide, at its sole discretion, which regions were to be restricted.

When the meeting adjourned, the men hastened to leave. There were no private discussions, no friendly loitering. The great hall became deserted in an unusually short time. Nobody spoke to or looked at Dan Conway.

In the lobby of the building, James Taggart met Orren Boyle. They had made no appointment to meet, but Taggart saw a bulky figure outlined against a marble wall and knew who it was before he saw the face. "You're looking better," said, his smile less soothing than usual, "than you were when you were laid up." "You don't know how I feel," said Boyle, "but I'm getting on my feet now." "You're a good fellow," said Taggart sullenly.

Dan Conway sat alone among rows of empty seats. He was still there when the charwoman came to clean the hall. When she hailed him, he rose obediently and shuffled to the door. Passing her in the aisle, he fumbled in his pocket and handed her a five



James Taggart and in that which made him smile, was a secret she had never suspected, and it was crucially important that she learn to understand it. But the thought flashed and vanished.

She whirled to the door of a closet and seized her coat.

"Where are you going?" Taggart's voice had dropped, it sounded disappointed and faintly worried.

She did not answer. She rushed out of the office.

"Dan, you have to fight them. I'll help you. I'll fight for you with everything I've got."

"No," he said, "it's no use."

"Do you mean because of that Alliance agreement that you signed? It won't hold. This is plain expropriation. No court will uphold it. And if Jim tries to hide behind the usual looters' slogan of 'public welfare,' I'll go on the stand and swear that Taggart transcontinental can't handle the whole traffic of Colorado. And any court rules against you, you can appeal and keep on appealing for the next ten years."

"Yes," he said, "I could . . . I'm not sure I'd win, but I could try and I could hang onto the railroad for a few years longer, but . . . No, it's not the legal points that I'm thinking about, one way or the other. It's not that."

"What, then?"

"I don't want to fight it, Dagny."

She looked at him incredulously. It was the one sentence which, he felt sure, he had never uttered before, a man could not reverse himself so late in life.

Dan Conway was approaching fifty. He had the square, stolid, stubborn face of a tough freight engineer, rather than a company president, the face of a fighter, with a young, tanned skin and graying hair. He had taken over a shaky little railroad in Arizona, a road whose net revenue was less than that of a successful grocery store, and he had built it into the best railroad of the Southwest. He spoke little, seldom read books, had never gone to college. The whole sphere of human endeavors, with one exception, left him blankly indifferent, he had no touch of that which people called culture. But he knew railroads.

"Why don't you want to fight?"

"Because they had the right to do it."

"Dan," she asked, "have you lost your mind?"

"I've never gone back on my word in my life," he said.

"I don't care what the courts say. I promised to obey the law. I have to obey."

"Did you expect the majority to do this to you?"

"No." There was a kind of faint convulsion in the stolid face. He spoke softly, not looking at her, the helpless astonishment still raw within him. "No, I didn't expect it. I heard them talking about it for over a year, but I didn't believe it. Even when they were voting, I didn't believe it."

"What did you expect?"

"I thought . . . They said all of us were to stand for the common good. I thought what I had done down there in Colorado was good. Good for everybody."

"Oh, you damn fool! Don't you see that that's what you're being punished for—because it was good?"

He shook his head. "I don't understand it," he said. "But I see no way out."

"Did you promise them to agree to destroy yourself?"

"There doesn't seem to be any choice for any of us."

"What do you mean?"

"Dagny, the whole world's in a terrible state right now. I don't know what's wrong with it, but something's very wrong. Men have to get together and find a way out. But who's to decide which way to take, unless it's the majority? I guess that's the only fair method of deciding. I don't see any other. I suppose somebody's got to be sacrificed. If it turned out to be me, I have no right to complain. The right's on their side. Men have to get together."

She made an effort to speak calmly, she was trembling with anger. "If that's the price of getting together, then I'll be damned if I want to live on the same earth with any human beings! If the rest of them can survive only by destroying us, then why should we wish them to survive? Nothing can make self-immolation proper. Nothing can give them the right to turn men into sacrificial animals. Nothing can make it moral to destroy the best. One can't be punished for being good. One can't be penalized for ability. If that is right, then we'd better start slaughtering one another, because there isn't any right at all in the world!"

He did not answer. He looked at her helplessly.

"If it's that kind of world, how can we live in it?" she asked.

"I don't know . . ." he whispered.

"Dan, do you really think it's right? In all truth, deep down, do you think it's right?"

He closed his eyes. "No," he said. Then he looked at her and she saw a look of torture for the first time. "That's what I've been sitting here trying to understand. I know that I ought to think it's right—but I can't. It's as if my tongue wouldn't turn to say it. I keep seeing every tie of the track down there, every signal light, every bridge, every night that I spent when . . ." His head dropped down on his arms. "Oh God, it's so damn unjust!"

"Dan," she said through her teeth, "fight it!"

He raised his head. His eyes were empty. "No," he said. "I would be wrong. I'm just selfish."

"Oh, damn that rotten tripe! You know better than that!"

"I don't know . . ." His voice was very tired. "I've been sitting

re, trying to think about it . . . I don't know what is right any more . . . " He added, "I don't think I care."

She knew suddenly that all further words were useless and that an Conway would never be a man of action again. She did not know what made her certain of it. She said, wondering, "You've never given up in the face of a battle before?"

"No, I guess I haven't. . . " He spoke with a quiet, indifferent astonishment. "I've fought storms and floods and rock slides and all kinds of things . . . I knew how to do it, and I liked doing it. . . it's this kind of battle—it's one I can't fight."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Who knows why the world is what it is? Oh, how is John Galt?"

She winced. "Then what are you going to do?"

"I don't know . . ."

"I mean—" She stopped.

He knew what she meant. "Oh, there's always something to do . . ." He spoke without conviction. "I guess it's only Colorado and New Mexico that they're going to declare restricted. I'll still live the line in Arizona is run." He added, "As it was twenty years ago . . . Well, it will keep me busy. I'm getting tired, Dagny didn't take time to notice it, but I guess I am."

She could say nothing.

"I'm not going to build a line through one of their blighted areas," he said in the same indifferent voice. "That's what they tried to hand me for a consolation prize, but I think it's just talk. You can't build a railroad where there's nothing for hundreds of miles. You can't have a couple of farmers who're not growing enough to feed themselves. You can't build a road and make it pay. If you don't make it pay, who's going to? It doesn't make sense to me. They just didn't know what they were saying."

"Oh, hell with their blighted areas! It's you I'm thinking about." He had to name it. "What will you do with yourself?"

"I don't know . . . Well, there's a lot of things I haven't had time to do. Fishing, for instance. I've always liked fishing. Maybe I'll start reading books, always meant to. Guess I'll take it easy now. Guess I'll go fishing. There's some nice places down in Arizona, where it's peaceful and quiet and you don't have to see a human being for miles . . ." He glanced up at her and added, "Forget it. Why should you worry about me?"

"It's not about you, it's . . . Dan," she said suddenly, "I hope you know it's not for your sake that I wanted to help you fight."

He smiled. It was a faint, friendly smile. "I know," he said.

"It's not out of pity or charity or any ugly reason like that. Look, I intended to give you the battle of your life, down there in Colorado. I intended to . . . and squeeze you to the . . ."

"You would have made . . . any I thought there was enough room there for both of us."

"Yes," he said. "There was."

"Still if I found that there wasn't. I would have fought you, and if I could make my road better than yours, I'd have broken you and not given a damn about what happened to you. But this . . . Dan, I don't think I want to look at our Rio Norte Line now. I . . . Oh God, Dan, I don't want to be a looter!"

He looked at her silently for a moment. It was an odd look, as if from a great distance. He said softly, "You should have been born about a hundred years earlier, kid. Then you would have had a chance."

"To hell with that. I intend to make my own chance."

"That's what I intended at your age."

"You succeeded?"

"Have I?"

She sat still, suddenly unable to move.

He sat up straight and said sharply, almost as if he were issuing orders, "You'd better look at that Rio Norte Line of yours, and you'd better do it fast. Get it ready before I move out, because if you don't, that will be the end of Ellis Wyatt and all the rest of them down there, and they're the best people left in the country. You can't let that happen. It's all on your shoulders now. It would be no use trying to explain to your brother that it's going to be much tougher for you down there without me to compete with. But you and I know it. So go to it. Whatever you do, you won't be a looter. No looter could run a railroad in that part of the country and last at it. Whatever you make down there, you will have earned it. Like like your brother don't count, anyway. It's up to you now."

She sat looking at him, wondering what to do. . . .

that the smile held sadness and pity.

"You'd better not feel sorry for me," he said. "I think, of the two of us, it's you who have the harder time ahead. And I think you're going to get it worse than I did."

She had telephoned the nolls and made an appointment to see Hank Rearden that afternoon. She had just hung up the receiver and was bending over the maps of the Rio Norte Line spread on her desk, when the door opened. Dagny looked up, startled, she did not expect the door of her office to be opened.

quality of self-control that seemed almost arrogant. He had dark eyes, disheveled hair, and his clothes were expensive, but worn. . . . He did not care or notice what he wore.

"Ellis Wyatt," he said in self-introduction.

She leaped to her feet, involuntarily. She understood why nobody had or could have stopped him in the outer office.

"Sit down, Mr. Wyatt," she said, smiling

"It won't be necessary." He did not smile. "I don't hold long conferences."

Slowly, taking her time by conscious intention, she sat down and leaned back, looking at him.

"Well?" she asked.

"I came to see you because I understand you're the only one who's got any brains in this rotten outfit."

"What can I do for you?"

"You can listen to an ultimatum." He spoke distinctly, giving unusual clarity to every syllable. "I expect Taggart Transcontinental, nine months from now, to run trains in Colorado as my business requires them to be run. If the snide stunt you people perpetrated on the Phoenix Durango was done for the purpose of saving yourself from the necessity of effort, this is to give you notice that you will not get away with it. I made no demands on you when you could not give me the kind of service I needed. I found someone who could. Now you wish to force me to deal with you. You expect to dictate terms by leaving me no choice. You expect me to hold my business down to the level of your incompetence. This is to tell you that you have miscalculated."

She said slowly, with effort, "Shall I tell you what I intend to do about our service in Colorado?"

"No. I have no interest in discussions and intentions. I expect transportation. What you do to furnish it and how you do it, is your problem, not mine. I am merely giving you a warning. Those who wish to deal with me, must do so on my terms or not at all. I do not make terms with incompetence. If you expect to earn money by carrying the oil I produce, you must be as good at your business as I am at mine. I wish this to be understood."

She said quietly, "I understand."

"I shan't waste time proving to you why you'd better take my ultimatum seriously. If you have the intelligence to keep this corrupt organization functioning at all, you have the intelligence to change this for yourself. We both know that if Taggart Transcontinental runs trains in Colorado the way it did five years ago, it will ruin me. I know that that is what you people intend to do. You expect to feed off me while you can and to find another carcass to pick dry after you have finished mine. That is the policy of most of mankind today. So here is my ultimatum. It is now in your power to destroy me. I may have to go, but if I go, I'll make sure that I take all the rest of you along with me."

Somewhere within her, under the numbness that held her still to receive the lashings, she felt a small point of pain, hot like the burn of scalding. She wanted to tell him of the years she had spent looking for men such as he to work with, she wanted to tell him that his enemies were hers, that she was fighting the same battle, she wanted to cry to him, "I'm not one of them!" But she knew that he could not do it. She bore the responsibility for Taggart Transcontinental and for everything done in its name; she had to justify herself now.



Sting straight her glance as steady and open as his she answered evenly "You will get the transportation you need Mr Wyatt."

his voice less sharp

All right Thank you Good day

She inclined her head He bowed and left the office

"That's the story Hank I had worked out an almost impossible schedule to complete the Rio Norte Line in twelve months. Now I'll have to do it in nine You were to give us the rail over a period of one year Can you give it to us within nine months? If there's any human way to do it do it If not I'll have to find some other means to finish it."

Rearden sat behind his desk His cold blue eyes made two horizontal cuts across the gaunt planes of his face they remained horizontal impassively half-closed he said evenly, without emphasis

"I'll do it"

Dagny leaned back in her chair The short sentence was a shock It was not merely relief it was the sudden realization that nothing else was necessary to guarantee that it would be done she needed no proofs no questions no explanations a complex problem could rest safely on three syllables pronounced by a man who knew what he was saying

"Don't show that you're relieved His voice was mocking "Not too obviously" His narrowed eyes were watching her with an unrevealing smile "I might think that I hold Taggart Transcontinental in my power"

"You know that anyway"

"I do And I intend to make you pay for it"

"I expect to How much?"

"Twenty dollars extra per ton on the balance of the order delivered after today"

"Pretty steep Hank Is that the best price you can give me?"

"No But that's the one I'm going to get I could ask twice that and you'd pay it"

"Yes I would And you could But you won't"

"Why won't it?"

"Because you need to have the Rio Norte Line built It's your first showcase for Rearden Metal"

He chuckled "That's right I like to deal with somebody who has no illusions about getting favors"

"Do you know what made me feel relieved when you decided to take advantage of it?"

"What?"

"That I was dealing for once with somebody who doesn't pretend to give favors"

His smile had a discernible quality now It was enjoyment "You

always play it open, don't you?" he asked.

"I've never noticed you doing otherwise"

"I thought I was the only one who could afford to"

"I'm not broke, in that sense, Hank"

"I think I'm going to break you some day—in that sense"

"Why?"

"I've always wanted to"

"Don't you have enough cowards around you?"

"That's why I'd enjoy trying it—because you're the only exception. So you think it's right that I should squeeze every penny of profit I can, out of your emergency?"

"Certainly I'm not a fool. I don't think you're in business for my convenience"

"Don't you wish I were?"

"I'm not a moocher, Hank"

"Aren't you going to find it hard to pay?"

"That's my problem, not yours. I want that rail"

"At twenty dollars extra per ton?"

"Okay, Hank"

"Fine. You'll get the rail. I may get my exorbitant profit—or  
 I don't get that line built in nine  
 will crash"

When he did not smile, his face looked inanimate only his eyes remained alive, active with a cold, brilliant clarity of perception but what he was made to feel by the things he perceived no one would be permitted to know, she thought, perhaps not even himself

"They've done their best to make it harder for you haven't they?"  
 he said.

"Yes I was counting on Colorado to save the Taggart system. Now it's up to me to save Colorado. Nine months from now, Dan Conway will close his road. If mine isn't ready, it won't be any use finishing it. You can't leave those men without transportation for a single day, let alone a week or a month. At the rate they've been growing, you can't stop them dead and then expect them to continue. It's like slamming brakes on an engine going two hundred miles an hour"

"I know"

"I can run a good railroad. I can't run it across a continent of sharecroppers who're not good enough to grow turnips successfully. I've got to have men like Ellis Wyatt to produce something to fill the trains I run. So I've got to give him a train and a track nine months from now, if I have to blast all the rest of us into hell to do it"

He smiled amused. "You feel very strongly about it, don't you?"

"Don't you?"

He would not answer, but merely held the smile

"Aren't you concerned about it?" she asked almost

"No."

"Then you don't realize what it means?"

"I realize that I'm going to get the rail rolled and you're going to get the track laid in nine months"

She smiled, relaxing, wearily and a little guiltily "Yes I know we will I know it's useless—getting angry at people like Jim and his friends We haven't any time for it. First, I have to undo what they've done Then afterwards"—she stopped, wondering, shook her head and shrugged—"afterwards, they won't matter"

"That's right They won't. When I heard about that Anti-dog-eat-dog business it made me sick But don't worry about the goddam bastards The two words sounded shockingly violent, because his face and voice remained calm 'You and I will always be there to save the country from the consequences of their actions' He got up, he said pacing the . . . You'll pull it through . . . All that lunacy is temp . . . defeat itself You a . . . for a while that's all"

She watched his tall figure moving across the office The office suited him it contained nothing but the few pieces of furniture he needed all of them harshly simplified down to their essential purpose all of them exorbitantly expensive in the quality of materials and the skill of design The room looked like a motor—a motor held within the glass case of broad windows But she noticed one astonishing detail a vase of jade that stood on top of a filing cabinet The vase was a solid, dark green stone carved into plain . . .

in the country You're not sure that I'm concerned about it? . . . states becoming one of my best customers, as you ought to know if you take time to read the reports on your freight traffic"

"I know I read them."

"I've been thinking of building a plant there in a few years To save them your transportation charges" He glanced at her. "You'll lose an awful lot of steel freight if I do"

"Go ahead I'll be satisfied with carrying your supplies, and the groceries for your workers, and the freight of the factories that will follow you there—and perhaps I won't have time to notice that I've lost your steel . . . What are you laughing at?"

"It's wonderful"

"What?"

—tries his best to harm my business? Because your brother Jim is a fool"

"He is But it's more than that. There's something worse than stupidity about it"

"Don't waste time trying to figure him out. Let him spit. He's no danger to anyone. People like Jim Taggart just clutter up the world."

"I suppose so."

"Incidentally, what would you have done if I'd said I couldn't deliver your rails sooner?"

"I would have torn up sidings or closed some branch line any

rt Trans-  
old sid

ings. Not so long as I'm in business."

She thought suddenly that she was wrong about his lack of notion, the hidden undertone of his manner was enjoyment. She realized that she had always felt a sense of light-hearted relaxation in his presence and known that he shared it. He was the only man she knew to whom she could speak without strain or effort. This, she thought, was a mind she respected, an adversary worth matching. Yet there had always been an odd sense of distance between them, the sense of a closed door; there was an impersonal quality in his manner, something within him that could not be reached.

He had stopped at the window. He stood for a moment looking at it. "Do you know that the first load of rail is being delivered to you today?" he asked.

"Of course I know it."

"Come here."

She approached him. He pointed silently. Far in the distance, beyond the mill structures, she saw a string of gondolas waiting on a siding. The bridge of an overhead crane cut the sky above them. The crane was moving. Its huge magnet held a load of rails glued to a disk by the sole power of contact. There was no trace of sun in the gray spread of clouds, yet the rails glistened as if the metal caught light out of space. The metal was a greenish-blue. The great chain stopped over a car, descended, jerked in a brief spasm and left the rails in the car. The crane moved back in majestic indifference, it looked like the giant drawing of a geometrical theorem moving above the men and the earth.

They stood at the window, watching silently intently. She did not speak, until another load of green-blue metal came moving across the sky. Then the first words she said were not about rail, track or an order completed on time. She said, as if greeting a new phenomenon of nature:

"Rearden Metal . . ."

He noticed that but said nothing. He glanced at her, then turned back to the window.

"Hank, this is great."

"Yes."

He said it simply, openly. There was no flattered pleasure in it, and no modesty. This, she knew, was a tribute to the first one person could pay another: the tribute of knowledge one's . . .

knowing that it is

She said, "When I think of what that metal can do, what it can make possible . . . Hank, this is the most important thing happening in the world today, and none of them know it."

"We know it"

They did not look at each other. They stood watching the train. On the front of the locomotive in the distance, she could distinguish the letters TT. She could distinguish the rails of the busiest industrial siding of the Taggart system.

"As soon as I can find a plant able to do it," she said, "I'm going to order Diesels made of Rearden Metal."

"You'll need them. How fast do you run your trains on the Norte track?"

"Now? We're lucky if we manage to make twenty miles an hour."

He pointed at the cars. "When that rail is laid, you'll be able to run trains at . . ."

motors, and what sort of thing one can design now."

"Have you thought of what it will do for chicken wire? Just plain chicken wire fences, made of Rearden Metal, that will cost a few pennies a mile and last two hundred years. And kitchenware that will be bought at the dime store and passed on from generation to generation. And ocean liners that one won't be able to dent with a torpedo."

"Did I tell you that I'm having tests made of communication wire of Rearden Metal?"

"I'm making so many tests that I'll never get through showing people what can be done with it and how to do it."

They spoke of the metal and of the possibilities which they could not exhaust. It was as if they were standing on a mountain top, seeing a limitless plain below and roads open in all directions. But they merely spoke of mathematical figures, of weights, pressures, resistances, costs.

She had forgotten her brother and his National Alliance. She had forgotten every problem, person and event behind her; they had always been clouded in her sight, to be hurried past, to be brushed aside, never final, never quite real. This was reality, she thought, this sense of clear outlines, of purpose, of lightness, of hope. This was the way she had expected to live—she had wanted to spend no hour and take no action that would mean less than this.

She looked at him in the exact moment when he turned to look at her. They stood very close to each other. She saw, in his eyes, that he felt as she did. If joy is the aim and the core of existence, she thought, and if that which has the power to give joy is always guarded as one's deepest secret, then they had seen each other naked in that moment.

He made a step back and said in a strange tone of dispassionate wonder, "We're a couple of blackguards, aren't we?"

"Why?"

"We haven't any spiritual goals or qualities. All we're after is material things. That's all we care for."

She looked at him, unable to understand. But he was looking past her, straight ahead, at the crane in the distance. She wished he

there had been no feeling in his voice, neither plea nor shame. He

and it's we who'll pull it through."

## Chapter V THE CLIMAX OF THE D'ANCONIAS

The newspaper was the first thing she noticed. It was clutched tightly in Eddie's hand, as he entered her office. She glanced up at his face; it was tense and bewildered.

"Daggy, are you very busy?"

"Why?"

"I know that you don't like to talk about him. But there's something here I think you ought to see."

She extended her hand silently for the newspaper.

The story on the front page announced that upon taking over the San Luis de Potosi the movement of the D'Anconias of

expected to exist there, and there were no indications that could have permitted anyone to be deluded. The government of the People's State of Mexico was holding emergency sessions about their discovery, in an uproar of indignation, they felt that they had been cheated.

Watching her, Eddie knew that Daggy sat looking at the newspaper long after she had finished reading. He knew that he had been right to feel a hint of fear, even though he could not tell what frightened him about that story.

He waited. She raised her head. She did not look at him. Her eyes were fixed, intent in concentration, as if trying to see something at a great distance.

He said his voice low Francisco is not a fool Whatever else he may be no matter what depravity he's sunk to—and I've given up trying to figure out why—he is not a fool He couldn't have made a mistake of this kind It is not possible I don't understand it."

I'm beginning to

She sat up jolted upright by a sudden movement that ran through her body like a shudder She said

Phone him at the Wayne Falkland and tell the bastard that I want to see him"

"Dagny" he said sadly, reproachfully, 'it's Frisco d Anconia."

"It was

\* \*

She walked through the early twilight of the city streets to the Wayne Falkland Hotel He says any time you wish," Eddie had told her The first lights appeared in a few windows high under the clouds The skyscrapers looked like abandoned lighthouses sending feeble dying signals out into an empty sea where no ships moved any longer A few snowflakes came down, past the dark windows of empty stores to melt in the mud of the sidewalks A string of

the Taggart estate That was the way she always ran when Eddie yelled 'It's Frisco d Anconia' and they both flew down the hill to the car approaching on the road below

He was the only guest whose arrival was an event in their childhood, their biggest event The running to meet him had become part of a contest among the three of them There was a birch tree on the hillside halfway between the road and the house Dagny and Eddie tried to get past the tree before Francisco could race up the hill to meet them On all the many days of his arrivals in all the many summers they never reached the birch tree, Francisco reached it first and stopped them when he was way past it Francisco always won as he always won everything

His parents were old friends of the Taggart family He was an only son and he was being brought up all over the world, his father it was said wanted him to consider the world as his future domain Dagny and Eddie could never be certain of where he would spend his winter, but once a year, every summer, a stern South American tutor brought him for a month to the Taggart estate

Francisco found it natural that the Taggart children should be chosen as his companions they were the crown heirs of Taggart Transcontinental as he was of d Anconia Copper "We are the only aristocracy left in the world—the aristocracy of money," he said to Dagny once, when he was fourteen. "It's the only ---





Francisco began vanishing every morning for some purpose nobody could discover. He went off on his bicycle before dawn, and returned in time to appear at the white and crystal table set for lunch on the terrace his manner *courteously punctual* and a little too innocent. He laughed refusing to answer, when Dagny and Eddie questioned him. They tried to follow him once, through the cold, pre morning darkness, but they gave it up, no one could track him when he did not want to be tracked.

After a while, Mrs. Taggart began to worry and decided to investigate. She never learned how he had managed to by pass all the child labor laws but she found Francisco working—by an unofficial deal with the dispatcher—as a call boy for Taggart Transcontinental, at a division point ten miles away. The dispatcher was stupefied by her personal visit he had no idea that his call boy was a house guest of the Taggarts. The boy was known to the local railroad crews as Frankie, and Mrs. Taggart preferred not to enlighten them about his full name. She merely explained that he was working without his parents' permission and had to quit at once. The dispatcher was sorry to lose him, Frankie, he said, was the best call boy they had ever had. 'I'd sure like to keep him on. Maybe we could make a deal with his parents?' he suggested. "I'm afraid not," said Mrs. Taggart faintly.

"Francisco," she asked when she brought him home, "what would your father say about this, if he knew?"

"My father would ask whether I was good at the job or not. That's all he'd want to know."

"Come now, I'm serious."

Francisco was looking at her politely, his courteous manner suggesting centuries of breeding and drawing rooms, but something in his eyes made her feel uncertain about the politeness. "Last winter," he answered, "I shipped out as a cabin boy on a cargo steamer that carried d'Anconia copper. My father looked for me for three months, but that's all he asked me when I came back."

"So that's how you spend your winters?" said Jim Taggart. Jim's smile had a touch of triumph, the triumph of finding cause to feel contempt.

"That was last winter," Francisco answered pleasantly, with a

tion his of mockery but it was not the mockery of malice—it was the laughter of a salute.

"To learn what it's like, Slug," he answered, "and to tell you that I've had a job with Taggart Transcontinental before you did."

Dagny and Eddie spent their winters trying to master some new skill, in order to astonish Francisco and beat him, for once. They never succeeded. When they showed him how to hit a ball with bat, a game he had never played before, he watched them for a few minutes, then said, "I think I get the idea. Let me try." He took

bat and sent the ball flying over a line of oak trees far at end of the field.

When Jim was given a motorboat for his birthday they all stood the river landing, watching the lesson, while an instructor showed how to run it. None of them had ever driven a motorboat before. The sparkling white craft, shaped like a bullet, kept stagger

When the boat came back and its two occupants stepped out, Francisco slipped behind the wheel. "Wait a moment," he said to the instructor, who remained on the landing. "Let me take a look at this." Then, before the instructor had time to move the boat out to the middle of the river, as if fired from a gun it was taking away before they grasped what they were seeing. As it went shrinking into the distance and sunlight, Dagny's picture of it as three straight lines its wake, the long shriek of its motor and the aim of the driver at its wheel.

She noticed the strange expression of her father's face as he looked at the vanishing speedboat. He said nothing; he just stood looking and remembered that she had seen him look that way once before, was when he inspected a complex system of pulleys which Francisco, aged twelve, had erected to make an elevator to the top of the mine.

"It's something I figured out." She did not know that what her father held on the crumpled sheets of paper was the crude version of a differential equation.

The heirs of Sebastián d'Anconia had been an unbroken line of sons, who knew how to bear his name. It was a tradition of the family that the man to disgrace them would be the heir who died, leaving the d'Anconia fortune no greater than he had received it. Throughout the generations, that disgrace had not come. An Argentinian legend said that the hand of a d'Anconia had the miraculous power of the saints—only it was not the power to heal but the power to produce.

The d'Anconia heirs had been men of unusual ability but none of them could match what Francisco d'Anconia promised to become. It was as if the centuries had sifted the family's qualities through

can do it " What he meant by doing was doing superlatively  
 No matter what discipline was required of him by his father's  
 exacting plan for his education, no matter what subject he was  
 ordered to study, Francisco mastered it with effortless amusement.  
 His father adored him, but concealed it carefully, as he concealed  
 the pride of knowing that he was bringing up the most brilliant  
 phenomenon of a brilliant family line Francisco, it was said, was  
 to be the climax of the d'Anconias

I don't know what sort of motto the d'Anconias have on their  
 family crest, Mrs Taggart said once, "but I'm sure that Francisco  
 will change it to 'What for?'" It was the first question he asked  
 about any activity proposed to him—and nothing would make  
 him act if he found no valid answer He flew through the days  
 of his summer month like a rocket, but if one stopped him in mid  
 flight, he could always name the purpose of his every random  
 moment. Two things were impossible to him to stand still or to  
 move aimlessly

"Let's find out" was the motive he gave to Dagny and Eddie  
 for anything he undertook, or "Let's make it." These were his  
 only forms of enjoyment

"I can do it," he said, when he was building his elevator, cling-  
 ing to the side of a cliff, driving metal wedges into rock, his arms  
 moving with an expert's rhythm, drops of blood slipping, un-  
 noticed, from under a bandage on his wrist. "No, we can't take  
 turns, Eddie, you're not big enough yet to handle a hammer Just  
 cart the weeds off and keep the way clear for me, I'll do the rest."  
 What blood? Oh, that's nothing, just a cut I got yesterday  
 Dagny, run to the house and bring me a clean bandage"

Jim watched them They left him alone, but they often saw him  
 standing in the distance, watching Francisco with a peculiar kind  
 of intensity

He seldom spoke in Francisco's presence But he would corner  
 Dagny and he would smile derisively, saying, "All those airs you  
 put on pretending that you're an iron woman with a mind of her  
 own! You're a spineless dishrag that's all you are It's disgusting

can twist  
 The way  
 you shine

He never  
 entered contests He could have ruled the junior country club He  
 never came within sight of their clubhouse, ignoring their eager  
 attempts to enroll the most famous heir in the world Dagny and  
 Eddie were his only friends They could not tell whether he  
 owned him or were owned by him completely, it made no differ-  
 ence either concept made them happy

The three of them sat . . .  
 own kin . . .  
 friend . . .  
 carcass . . .  
 "Francisco" . . .

libraries, absorbing the culture of the world" "What do you think I'm doing?" asked Francisco.

There were no factories in the neighborhood, but Francisco taught Dagny and Eddie to steal rides on Taggart trains to distant towns where they climbed fences into mill yards or hung on window sills, watching machinery as other children watched fires. "When I run Taggart Transcontinental . . ." Dagny would say at times "When I run d'Anconia Copper . . ." said Francisco. They never had to explain the rest to each other, they knew each other's goal and motive.

Railroad conductors caught them, once in a while. Then a

the Taggart station, "you've been just about everywhere in the

rid. What's the most important thing on earth?" "This," answered Francisco, pointing to the emblem TT on the front of an engine. He added, "I wish I could have met Nat Taggart."

He noticed Dagny's glance at him. He said nothing else. But minutes later, when they went on through the woods, down a narrow path of damp earth, ferns and sunlight, he said, "Dagny, I'll give you a coat-of-arms. I'll always worship the symbols of nobility. Am I not supposed to be an aristocrat? Only I don't

when I run d'Anconia Copper . . ." "I'm studying mining and metallurgy, because I must be ready for the time when I run d'Anconia Copper . . ." "I'm studying electrical engineering because power companies are the best customers of d'Anconia Copper . . ."

"I'm going to study philosophy, because I'll need it to protect d'Anconia Copper . . ."

"Don't you ever think of anything but d'Anconia Copper?" Jim asked him once.

"No."

"It seems to me that there are other things in the world."

"Let others think about them."

"Isn't that a very selfish attitude?"

"It is."

"What are you after?"

"Money."

"Don't you have enough?"

"In his lifetime, every one of my ancestors raised the production of d'Anconia Copper by about ten per cent. I intend to raise it by one hundred."

"What for?" Jim asked, in sarcastic imitation of Francisco's race.

"When I die, I hope to go to heaven—whatever the hell that is—and I want to be able to afford the price of admission"

"Virtue is the price of admission," Jim said haughtily

"That's what I mean, James. So I want to be prepared to claim the greatest virtue of all—that I was a man who made money"

"Any grafter can make money"

James you ought to discover some day that words have an exact meaning

Francisco smiled. It was a smile of radiant mockery. Watching them Dagny thought suddenly of the difference between Francisco and her brother Jim. Both of them smiled derisively. But Francisco seemed to laugh at things because he saw something much greater. Jim laughed as if he wanted to let nothing remain great.

She noticed the particular quality of Francisco's smile again, one night when she sat with him and Eddie at a bonfire they had built in the woods. The glow of the fire enclosed them within a fence of broken, moving strips that held pieces of tree trunks, branches and distant stars. She felt as if there were nothing beyond that fence, nothing but black emptiness with the hint of some breath stopping, frightening promise—like the future. But the future, she thought, would be like Francisco's smile, there was the key to it, the advance warning of its nature—in his face in the firelight under the pine branches—and suddenly she felt an unbearable happiness, unbearable because it was too full and she had no way to express it. She glanced at Eddie. He was looking at Francisco. In some quiet way of his own, Eddie felt as she did.

"Why do you like Francisco?" she asked him weeks later, when Francisco was gone.

Eddie looked astonished. It had never occurred to him that if feeling could be questioned. He said "He makes me feel safe."

She said "He makes me expect excitement and danger."

Francisco was sixteen, next summer, the day when she stood alone with him on the summit of a cliff by the river, their shoes and shirts torn in their climb to the top. They stood looking down the Hudson; they had heard that on clear days one could see New York in the distance. But they saw only a haze made of three different kinds of light merging together—the river, the sky and the sun.

She knelt on a rock, leaning forward, trying to catch some hint of the city, the wind blowing her hair across her eyes. She glanced back over her shoulder—and

at the  
and the  
flat

body, unmistakably his glance made her aware of her pose, of her shoulder showing through the torn shirt, of her long, scratch-sunburned legs slanting from the rock to the ground. She stood angrily and backed away from him. And while throwing her back up resentment in her eyes to meet the sternness in his, while feeling certain that his was a glance of condemnation and hostility, she heard herself asking him, a tone of smiling defiance in her voice

"What do you like about me?"

He laughed, she wondered, aghast, what had made her say it. He answered, "There's what I like about you," pointing to the glittering rails of the Taggart station in the distance.

"It's not mine," she said, disappointed.

"What I like is that it's going to be."

She smiled, conceding his victory by being openly delighted. She did not know why he had looked at her so strangely, but she felt that he had seen some connection, which she could not grasp, between her body and something within her that would give her the strength to rule those rails some day.

He said brusquely, "Let's see if we can see New York," and jerked her by the arm to the edge of the cliff. She thought that he did not notice that he twisted her arm in a peculiar way, holding it down along the length of his side, it made her stand pressed against him, and she felt the warmth of the sun in the skin of his legs against hers. They looked far out into the distance, but they saw nothing ahead except a haze of light.

When Emma saw that it was the same old moment, years ago,

when she had seen him dive first from a rock into the Hudson, had seen him vanish under the black water and had stood, knowing that he would reappear in an instant and that it would then be her turn to follow.

She dismissed the fear, dangers, to Francisco, were merely opportunities for another brilliant performance; there were no battles he could lose, no enemies to beat him. And then she thought of a remark she had heard a few years earlier. It was a strange remark—and it was strange that the words had remained in her mind, even though she had thought them senseless at the time. The man who said it was an old professor of mathematics, a friend of her father, who came to their country house for just that one visit. She liked his face, and she could still see the peculiar sadness in his eyes when he said to her father one evening, sitting on the terrace in the fading light:

"It was the most distinguished institution of learning left in the world, the Patrick Henry University of Cleveland. He did not come to visit her in New York, that winter, even though he was only a night's journey away. They did not write to each other, they had never done it. But she knew that he would come back to the country for one summer month.

There were a few times, that winter, when she felt an undefined apprehension; the professor's words kept returning to her mind, as a warning which she could not explain. She did not tell them. When she thought of Francisco she felt the steady assurance that she would have another month as an

the future, as a proof that the world she saw ahead was real, even though it was not the world of those around her

"Hi, Slug!"

"Hi, Frisco!"

her eyelids and the upward thrust of such an immense relief that she ground her feet into the grass under her sandals, because she thought she would rise, weightless, through the wind

It was a sudden sense of freedom and safety—because she realized that she knew nothing about the events of his life, had never known and would never need to know The world of chance—of families, meals, schools, people, of aimless people dragging the load of some unknown guilt—was not theirs, could not change him, could not matter He and she had never spoken of the things that happened to them, but only of what they thought and of what they would do

She looked at him silently, as if a voice within her were saying Not the things that are, but the things we'll make . We are not to be stopped, you and I . . . Forgive me the fear, if I thought I could lose you to them—forgive me the doubt, they'll never reach you—I'll never be afraid for you again.

He too, stood looking at her for a moment—and it seemed to her that it was not a look of greeting after an absence, but the look of someone who had thought of her every day of that year She could not be certain, it was only an instant, so brief that just as she caught it he was turning to point at the birch tree behind him and saying in the tone of their childhood game

"I wish you'd learn to run faster I'll always have to wait for you"

"Will you wait for me?" she asked gaily.

He answered, without smiling, "Always"

As they went up the hill to the house, he spoke to Eddie, while she walked silently by his side She felt that there was a new reticence between them which, strangely, was a new kind of intimacy

She did not question him about the . . . after, she

asked . . . "red, "but

ther . . . "Have you made any friends there?"

"Two"

He told her nothing else.

Jim was approaching his senior year in a college in New York. His studies had given him a manner of odd, quavering belligerence, as if he had found a new weapon He addressed Francisco once

earn something about ideals. It's time to forget your selfish greed and give some thought to your social responsibilities, because I think that all those millions you're going to inherit are not for your personal pleasure, they are a trust for the benefit of the underprivileged and the poor, because I think that the person who doesn't realize this is the most depraved type of human being."

Francisco answered courteously, "It is not advisable, James, to venture unsolicited opinions. You should spare yourself the embarrassing discovery of their exact value to your listener."

Dagny asked him, as they walked away, "Are there many men like Jim in the world?"

Francisco laughed. "A great many."

"Don't you mind it?"

"No. I don't have to deal with them. Why do you ask that?"

"Because I think they're dangerous in some way. I don't know how . . ."

"Good God, Dagny! Do you expect me to be afraid of an object like James?"

It was days later, when they were alone, walking through the woods on the shore of the river, that she asked

"Francisco, what's the most depraved type of human being?"

"The man without a purpose."

She was looking at the straight shafts of the trees that stood against the great, sudden, shining spread of space beyond. The forest was dim and cool, but the outer branches caught the hot, silver sunrays from the water. She wondered why she enjoyed the night, when she had never taken any notice of the country around her, why she was so aware of her enjoyment, of her movements, of her body in the process of walking. She did not want to look at Francisco. She felt that his presence seemed more intensely real when she kept her eyes away from him, almost as if the stressed awareness of herself came from him, like the sunlight from the water.

"You think you're good, don't you?" he asked.

"I always did," she answered defiantly, without turning.

"Well, let me see you prove it. Let me see how far you'll rise with Tiggart Transcontinental. No matter how good you are, I'll expect you to wring everything you've got, trying to be still better. And when you've worn yourself out to reach a goal, I'll expect you to start for another."

"Why do you think that I care to prove anything to you?" she asked.

"Want me to answer?"

"No," she whispered, her eyes fixed upon the other shore of the river in the distance.

She heard him chuckling and after a while he said, "Dagny, there's nothing of any importance in life—except how well you do your work. Nothing. Only that. Whatever else you are, will from that. It's the only measure of human value. All the old ethics they'll try to ram down your throat are just paper money put out by swindlers to fleece people of



The code of competence is the only system of morality that's on a gold standard. When you grow up you'll know what I mean."

I know it now. But Francisco, why are you and I the only ones who seem to know it?"

"Why should you care about the others?"

"Because I like to understand things, and there's something about people that I can understand."

"What?"

"My father."

grades in the class. I don't even have to study. I always get A's. Do you suppose I should try to get D's for a change and become the most popular girl in school?

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felt pleasure from the dull, hot pain in her cheek and from the taste of blood in the corner of her mouth. She felt pleasure in what she suddenly grasped about him, about herself and about his motive.

She braced her feet to stop the dizziness, she held her head straight and stood facing him in the consciousness of a new power, feeling herself his equal for the first time, looking at him with a mocking smile of triumph.

"Did I hurt you as much as that?" she asked.

He looked astonished, the question and the smile were not those of a child. He answered, "Yes—if it pleases you."

"It does."

"Don't ever do that again. Don't crack jokes of that kind."

"Don't be a fool. Whatever made you think that I cared about being popular?"

"When you grow up, you'll understand what sort of unspeakable thing you said."

"I understand it now."

He turned abruptly, took out his handkerchief and dipped it in the water of the river. "Come here," he ordered.

She laughed, stepping back. "Oh no. I want to keep it as it is. I hope it swells terribly. I like it."

He looked at her for a long moment. He said slowly, very earnestly, "Dagny, you're wonderful."

"I thought that you always thought so," she answered, her voice insolently casual.

When she came home, she told her mother that she had cut her lip by falling against a rock. It was the only lie she ever told. She did not do it to protect Francisco, she did it because she felt, for some reason which she could not define, that the incident was secret too precious to share.

Next summer, when Francisco came, she was sixteen. She started running down the hill to meet him, but stopped abruptly. He saw it, stopped and they stood for a moment, looking at each other across the distance of a long, green slope. It was he who walked up toward her, walked very slowly, while she stood waiting.

When he approached, she smiled innocently, as if unconscious of any contest intended or won.

"You might like to know," she said, "that I have a job on the railroad. Night operator at Rockdale."

He laughed. "All right, Taggart Transcontinental, now it's a race. Let's see who'll do greater honor, you—to Nat Taggart, or I—to Sebastián d'Anconia."

That winter, she stripped her life down to the bright simplicity of a geometrical drawing—a few straight lines—to and from the engineering college in the city each day, to and from her job at Rockdale Station each night—and the closed circle of her room, a room littered with diagrams of motors, blueprints of steel structures and railroad timetables.

Mrs. Taggart watched her daughter in unhappy bewilderment. She could have forgiven all the omissions but one. Dagny showed no sign of interest in men, no romantic inclination whatever. Mrs. Taggart did not approve of extremes, she had been prepared to contend with an extreme of the opposite kind if necessary, she found herself thinking that this was worse. She felt embarrassed when she had to admit that her daughter, at seventeen, did not have a single admirer.

"Dagny and Francisco d'Anconia?" she said smiling ruefully, in answer to the curiosity of her friends. "Oh no, it's not a romance. It's an international industrial cartel of some kind. That's all they seem to care about."

Mrs. Taggart heard James say one evening, in the presence of guests, a peculiar tone of satisfaction in his voice, "Dagny, even though you were named after her, you really look more like Nat Taggart than like that first Dagny Taggart, the famous beauty who was his wife." Mrs. Taggart did not know which offended her most, that James said it or that Dagny accepted it happily as a compliment.

She would never have a chance, thought Mrs. Taggart, to form some conception of her own daughter. Dagny was only a figure hurrying in and out of the apartment—a slim figure in a leather jacket, with a raised collar, a short skirt and long show-girl legs. She walked cutting across a room with a masculine, straight-line abruptness but she had a peculiar grace of motion that was swift, tense and oddly challengingly feminine.

At times catching a glimpse of Dagny's face, Mrs. Taggart caught an expression which she could not quite define. It was much more than gaiety, it was the look of such an untouched purity of enjoyment that she found it abnormal too. No young girl could be so insensitive as to have discovered no sadness in life. Her daughter, she concluded, was incapable of emotion.

"Dagny," she said one day, "don't you ever get worried?"

time?" Dagny looked at her incredulously and answered, "What do you think I'm having?"

The decision to give her daughter a formal debut cost Mrs. Taggart a great deal of anxious thought. She did not know whether she was introducing to New York society Miss Dagny Taggart in the Social Register or the night operator of Rockdale Station, she was inclined to believe it was more truly thus last; and she felt certain that Dagny would reject the idea of such an occasion. She was astonished when Dagny accepted it with inexplicable eagerness, for once like a child.

She was astonished again, when she saw Dagny dressed for the party. It was the first feminine dress she had ever worn—a gown of white chiffon with a huge skirt that floated like a cloud. Mrs. Taggart had expected her to look like a preposterous contrast. Dagny looked like a beauty. She seemed both older and more radiantly head

"Yes," said Dagny, without any astonishment.

The ballroom of the Wayne Falkland Hotel had been decorated under Mrs. Taggart's direction, she had an artist's taste, and the

ful," said Mrs. Taggart. "I want this evening to be very beautiful for you, Dagny. The first ball is the most romantic event of one's life."

To Mrs. Taggart, the greatest surprise was the moment when she saw Dagny standing under the lights, looking at the ballroom. This was not a child, not a girl, but a woman, a woman with a dangerous power that Mrs. Taggart had never seen before. In an age of casual admiration, in an age of people who held themselves as if they were not men, but meat—Dagny's bearing seemed almost indecent, because this was the way a woman would have faced a ballroom centuries ago, when the act of displaying one's half-naked body for the admiration of men was an act of daring, when it had meaning, and but one meaning, acknowledged by all as a high adventure. And this—thought Mrs. Taggart, smiling—was the girl she had believed to be devoid of sexual capacity. She felt an immense relief, and a touch of amusement in the thought that a discovery of this kind should make her feel relieved.

Neither Dagny nor Mrs Taggart said a word when they rode home together But hours later on a sudden impulse Mrs Taggart

morning

When Dagny turned Mrs Taggart saw only puzzled helplessness in her face the face was calm but something about it made Mrs Taggart wish she had not wished that her daughter should discover sadness

"Mother do they think it's exactly in reverse?" she asked

"What?" asked Mrs Taggart bewildered

"The things you were talking about The lights and the flowers Do they expect those things to make them romantic not the other way around?"

"Darling what do you mean?"

"There wasn't a person there who enjoyed it" she said her voice lifeless "or who thought or felt anything at all They moved about,

"What men? There wasn't a man there I couldn't squash ten of "

Days later sitting at her desk at Rockdale Station feeling light heartedly at home Dagny thought of the party and shrugged in contemptuous reproach at her own disappointment She looked up it was spring and there were leaves on the tree branches in the darkness outside the air was still and warm She asked herself what she had expected from that party She did not know But she felt it again here now as she sat slouched over a battered desk, looking out into the darkness a sense of expectation without object, rising through her body slowly like a warm liquid She slumped forward across the desk lazily feeling neither exhaustion nor desire to work.

When Francisco came that summer she told him about the party and about her disappointment He listened silently looking at her for the first time with that glance of unmoving mockery which he reserved for others a glance that seemed to see too much She felt as if he heard in her words more than she knew she told him

She saw the same glance in his eyes on the evening when she left him too early They were alone sitting on the shore of the river She had another hour before she was due at Rockdale There were long, thin strips of fire in the sky and red sparks floating lazily on the water He had been silent for a long time, when she rose abruptly and told him that she had to go He did not try to stop her he leaned back his elbows in the grass and looked at her without moving his glance seemed to say that he knew her motive Hurrying angrily up the slope to the house she wondered what

had made her leave she did not know, it had been a sudden restless-  
ness that came from a feeling she did not identify till now a feeling  
of expectation

Each night she drove the five miles from the country house to  
Rockdale. She came back at dawn, slept a few hours and got up with  
the rest of the household. She felt no desire to sleep. Undressing for  
bed in the first rays of the sun, she felt a tense, joyous, causeless im-  
patience to face the day that was starting.

She saw Francisco's mocking glance again, across the net of a  
tennis court. She did not remember the beginning of that game,  
they had often played tennis together and he had always won. She  
did not know at what moment she decided that she would win, this  
time. When she became aware of it, it was no longer a decision  
or a wish, but a quiet fury rising within her. She did not know why  
she had to win, she did not know why it seemed so crucially, urgently  
necessary, she knew only that she had to and that she would.

It seemed easy to play. It was as if her will had vanished and  
someones power were playing for her. She watched Francisco's  
figure—a tall swift figure the suntan of his arms stressed by his  
short white shirt sleeves. She felt an arrogant pleasure in seeing  
the skill of his movements because *this* was the thing which she  
would beat so that his every expert gesture became her victory,  
and the brilliant competence of his body became the triumph of  
hers.

She felt the rising pain of exhaustion—not knowing that it was  
pain feeling it only in sudden stabs that made her aware of some  
part of her body for an instant, to be forgotten in the next: her  
arm socket—her shoulder blades—her hips, with the white  
shorts sticking to her skin—the muscles of her legs, when she  
leaped to meet the ball but did not remember whether she  
came down to touch the ground again—her eyelids when the  
sky went dark red and the ball came at her through the darkness  
like a whirling white flame—the thun, hot wire that shot from  
her ankle, up her back and went on shooting straight across  
the air, driving the ball at Francisco's figure. She felt an  
exultant pleasure—because every stab of pain begun in her body  
had to end in his because he was being exhausted as she was—  
what she did to herself, she was doing it also to him—this was  
what he felt—this was what she drove him to—it was not her  
pain that she felt or her body but his.

In the moments when she saw his face she saw that he was  
laughing. He was looking at her as if he understood. He was  
playing, not to win, but to make it harder for her—sending his  
shots wild to make her run—losing points to see her twist her  
body in an agonizing backhand—standing still, letting her think  
he would miss, only to let his arm shoot out casually at the last  
moment and send the ball back with such force that she knew  
she would miss it. She felt as if she could not move again, not  
ever—and it was strange to find herself landing suddenly, at the  
other side of the court, smashing the ball in time smashing it

if she wished it to burst to pieces, as if she wished it were Francisco's face

Just once more, she thought, even if the next one would crack the bones of her arm. Just once more even if the air which she forced down in gasps past her tight, swollen throat, could be stopped altogether. Then she felt nothing, no pain, no muscles, only the thought that she had to beat him to see him exhausted, to see him collapse, and then she would be able to die in the next moment.

She won. Perhaps it was his laughing that made him lose, for once. He walked to the net, while she stood still and threw his racket across, at her feet, as if knowing that this was what she wanted. He walked out of the court and fell down on the grass of the lawn, collapsing, his head on his arm.

She approached him slowly. She stood over him looking down at his body stretched at her feet, looking at his sweat-soaked shirt and the strands of his hair spilled across his arm. He raised his head. His glance moved slowly up the line of her legs, to her shorts, to her blouse to her eyes. It was a mocking glance that seemed to see straight through her clothes and through her mind. And it seemed to say that he had won.

She sat at her desk at Rockdale, that night, alone in the old station building, looking at the sky in the window. It was the hour she liked best, when the top panes of the window grew clearer and the rails of the track outside became threads of blurred silver across the lower panes. She turned off her lamp and watched the vast, soundless motion of light over a motionless earth. Things moved still, not a leaf trembled on the branches while the sky slowly lost its color and became an expanse that looked like a road of glowing water.

Her telephone was silent at this hour almost as if movement had stopped everywhere along the system. She heard steps approaching outside, suddenly, close to the door. Francisco came in. He had never come here before, but she was not astonished to see him.

"What are you doing up at this hour?" she asked.

"I didn't feel like sleeping."

"How did you get here? I didn't hear your car."

"I walked."

Moments passed before she realized that she had not asked him why he came and that she did not want to ask it.

He wandered through the room looking at the clusters of way bills that hung on the walls at the calendar with a picture of the great Comet caught in a proud surge of motion toward the looker. He seemed casually at home as if he felt that the place belonged to them, as they always felt wherever they went together. But he did not seem to want to talk. He asked a few questions about his job then he kept silent.

As the light grew outside movement grew down on the line and the telephone started ringing in the silence. She turned to her work. He sat in a corner, one leg thrown over the arm of his chair, waiting.

She worked swiftly, feeling inordinately clear headed. She found pleasure in the rapid precision of her hands. She concentrated on the sharp, bright sound of the phone, on the figures of train numbers, car numbers, order numbers. She was conscious of nothing else.

But when a thin sheet of paper fluttered down to the floor and she bent to pick it up, she was suddenly as intently conscious of that particular moment, of herself and her own movement. She noticed her gray linen skirt, the rolled sleeve of her gray blouse and her naked arm reaching down for the paper. She felt her heart stop causelessly in the kind of gasp one feels in moments of anticipation. She picked up the paper and turned back to her desk.

It was almost full daylight. A train went past the station, without stopping. In the purity of the morning light, the long line of car roofs melted into a silver string and the train seemed suspended above the ground, not quite touching it, going past through the air. The floor of the station trembled, and glass rattled in the windows. She watched the train's flight with a smile of excitement. She glanced at Francisco. He was looking at her, with the same smile.

When the day operator arrived, she turned the station over to him and they walked out into the morning air. The sun had not yet risen and the air seemed radiant in its stead. She felt no exhaustion. She felt as if she were just getting up.

She started toward her car, but Francisco said, "Let's walk home. We'll come for the car later."

"All right."

She was not astonished and she did not mind the prospect of walking five miles. It seemed natural, natural to the moment's peculiar reality that was sharply clear but cut off from everything, immediate, but disconnected, like a bright island in a wall of fog, the heightened, unquestioning reality one feels when one is drunk.

The road led through the woods. They left the highway for an old trail that went twisting among the trees across miles of untouched country. There were no traces of human existence around them. Old ruts, overgrown with grass, made human presence seem more distant, adding the distance of years to the distance of miles. A haze of twilight remained over the ground, but in the breaks between the tree trunks there were leaves that hung in patches of shining green and seemed to light the forest. The leaves hung still. They walked, alone to move through a motionless world. She noticed suddenly that they had not said a word for a long time.

They came to a clearing. It was a small hollow at the bottom of a shaft made of straight rock hillsides. A stream cut across the grass, and tree branches flowed low to the ground, like a curtain of green fluid. The sound of the water stressed the silence. The distant cut of open sky made the place seem more hidden. Far above, on the crest of a hill, one tree caught the first rays of sunlight.

They stopped and looked at each other. She knew, only when he did it, that she had known he would. He seized her, she felt her

ps in his mouth, felt her arms grasping him in violent answer, and new for the first time how much she had wanted him to do it.

She felt a moment's rebellion and a hint of fear. He held her pressing the length of his body against hers with a tense, purposeful

of his purpose, her vague knowledge of it was wiped out. He had no power to believe it clearly, in this moment, to believe it about herself, she knew only that she was afraid—yet what she felt was as if she were crying to him. Don't ask me for it—oh don't ask me—do it!

She braced her feet for an instant, to resist, but his mouth was pressed to hers and they went down to the ground together never breaking their lips apart. She lay still—as the motionless, then the quivering object of an act which he did simply, unhesitatingly, as of right, the right of the unendurable pleasure it gave them.

He named what it meant to both of them in the first words he spoke afterwards. He said "We had to learn it from each other." She looked at his long figure stretched on the grass beside her, he wore black slacks and a black shirt, her eyes stopped on the belt pulled tight across his slender waistline and she felt the stab of an emotion that was like a gasp of pride, pride in her ownership of his body. She lay on her back, looking up at the sky, feeling no desire to move or think or know that there was any time beyond this moment.

When she came home, when she lay in bed, naked because her body had become an unfamiliar possession, too precious for the touch of a nightgown, because it gave her pleasure to feel naked and to feel as if the white sheets of her bed were touched by Francisco's body—when she thought that she would not sleep, because she did not want to rest and lose the most wonderful exhaustion she had ever known—her last thought was of the times when she had wanted to express, but found no way to do it, an instant's knowledge of a feeling greater than happiness, the feeling of one's blessing upon the whole of the earth, the feeling of being in love with the fact that one exists and in this kind of world she thought that the act she had learned was the way one expressed it. If this was a thought of the gravest importance she did not know it, nothing could be grave in a universe from which the concept of pain had been wiped out, she was not there to weigh her conclusion, she was asleep, a faint smile on her face, in a silent, luminous room filled with the light of morning.



That summer, she met him in the woods, in hidden corners by the river, on the floor of an abandoned shack, in the cellar of the house. These were the only times when she learned to feel a sense of beauty—by looking up at old wooden rafters or at the steel plate of an air-conditioning machine that whirled tensely, rhythmically above their heads. She wore slacks or cotton summer dresses yet she was never so feminine as when she stood beside him, sagging in his arms, abandoning herself to anything he wished, in open acknowledgment of his power to reduce her to helplessness by the pleasure he had the power to give her. He taught her every manner of sensuality he could invent. "Isn't it wonderful that our bodies can give us so much pleasure?" he said to her once, quite simply. They were happy and radiantly innocent. They were both incapable of the conception that joy is sin.

They kept their secret from the knowledge of others, not as a shameful guilt, but as a thing that was immaculately theirs, beyond anyone's right of debate or appraisal. She knew the general doctrine on sex, held by people in one form or another, the doctrine that sex was an ugly weakness of man's lower nature, to be condoned regretfully. She experienced an emotion of chastity that made her shrink, not from the desires of her body, but from any contact with the minds who held this doctrine.

That winter, Francisco came to see her in New York, at unpredictable intervals. He would fly down from Cleveland, without warning, twice a week, or he would vanish for months. She would sit on the floor of her room, surrounded by charts and blueprints, she would hear a knock at her door and snap, "I'm busy!" then hear a mocking voice ask, "Are you?" and leap to her feet to throw the door open, to find him standing there. They would go to an apartment he had rented in the city, a small apartment in a quiet neighborhood. "Francisco," she said, "I'm your are." She felt the granted the title.

In the many months of his absence, she never wondered whether he was true to her or not, she knew he was. She knew, even though she was too young to know the reason, that indiscriminate desire and unselective indulgence were possible only to those who

that comes from driving one's energy beyond its limit. She laughed at him once, boasting that she was an old employee of Taggart Transcontinental while he had not.

She did not learn the story until the next fall, when he had graduated and returned to New York after a visit to his father in Buenos Aires. Then he told her that he had taken two courses of education during the last four years—one at the Patrick Henry University, the other in a copper foundry on the outskirts of Cleveland. "I like to learn things for myself," he said. He had started working in the foundry as furnace boy, when he was sixteen and now, at twenty, he owned it. He acquired his first title of property, with the aid of some inaccuracy about his age, on the day when he received his university diploma, and he sent them both to his father.

He showed her a photograph of the foundry. It was a small, grimy place, disreputable with age, battered by years of a losing struggle, above its entrance gate, like a new flag on the mast of a derelict, hung the sign "d'Anconia Copper."

The public relations man of his father's office in New York had boasted, outraged, "But, Don Francisco, you can't do that! What will the public think? That name on a dump of this kind?" "It's my name," Francisco had answered.

When he entered his father's office in Buenos Aires, a large room, severe and modern as a laboratory, with photographs of the properties of d'Anconia Copper as sole ornament on its walls—photographs of the greatest mines, ore docks and foundries in the world—he saw, in the place of honor, facing his father's desk, a photograph of the Cleveland foundry with the new sign above its entrance.

His father's eyes moved from the photograph to Francisco's face as he stood in front of the desk.

"Isn't it a little too soon?" his father asked.

"I couldn't have stood four years of nothing but lectures."

"Where did you get the money for your first payment on that property?"

"By playing the New York stock market."

"What? Who taught you to do that?"

"It is not difficult to judge which industrial ventures will succeed and which won't."

"Where did you get the money to play with?"

"From the allowance you sent me, sir, and from my wages."

"When did you have time to watch the stock market?"

"While I was writing a thesis on the influence—upon subsequent metaphysical systems—of Aristotle's theory of the Immovable Mover."

Francisco's stay in New York was brief, that fall. His father was sending him to Montana as assistant superintendent of a d'Anconia mine. "Oh well," he said to Dagny, smiling, "my father does not think it advisable to let me rise too fast. I would not ask him to take me on faith. If he wants a factual demonstration, I shall comply." In the evening, Francisco came back on the head of the New

... . . . . . knew  
... . . . . . after

... unexpectedly—and she  
presence in her life,  
at any moment  
thought of his hands  
as she had seen them on the wheel of a motorboat he drove his  
business with the same smooth, dangerous, confidently mastered  
speed. But one small incident remained in her mind as a shock  
did not fit him. She saw him standing at the window of his office  
after twilight of the city. He did

would not tell her what it was.

When she saw him again, no trace of that incident remained  
his manner. It was spring and they stood together on the roof terrace  
of a restaurant, the light silk of her evening gown blowing in the  
wind against his tall figure in formal black clothes. They looked

He was twenty three when his father died and he went to Buenos  
Aires to take over the d'Anconia estate, now his. She did not see  
him again for three years.

He wrote to her, at first, at random intervals. He wrote about  
d'Anconia Copper, about the world market, about issues affecting  
the interests of Taggart Transcontinental. His letters were brief  
written by hand, usually at night.

She was not unhappy in his absence. She, too, was making her  
first steps toward the control of a future kingdom. Among the  
leaders of industry, her father's friends, she heard it said that she  
had better watch the young d'Anconia heir, if that copper company  
had been great before, it would sweep the world now, under his  
management promised to become. She smiled, without astonishment.  
There were moments when she felt a sudden, violent longing  
for him, but it was only impatience, not pain. She dismissed it,  
the confident knowledge that they were both working toward  
future that would bring them everything they wanted, including  
each other. Then his letters stopped.

She was twenty four on that day of spring when the telephone  
rang on her desk, in an office of the Taggart Building. "Dagny," said  
a voice she recognized at once, "I'm at the Wayne Falkland Company  
to have dinner with me tonight. At seven." He said it with  
greeting, as if they had parted the day before. Because it took  
a moment to regain the art of breathing, she realized for the first  
time how much that voice meant to her. "All right . . . Francisco

e answered. They needed to say nothing else. She thought, reaching the receiver, that his return was natural and as she had ways expected it to happen, except that she had not expected her sudden need to pronounce his name or the stab of happiness she felt while pronouncing it.

When she entered his hotel room, that evening, she stopped short. He stood in the middle of the room, looking at her—and she saw a smile that came slowly, involuntarily, as if he had lost the ability to smile and were astonished that he should regain it. He looked at her—  
“at she was or  
for help of a  
started their

“Hi, we had started to say, Hi—but he did not finish it. Instead, after a moment, he said, “You’re beautiful, Dagny.” He said as if it hurt him.

“Francisco, I—”

He shook his head, not to let her pronounce the words they had ever said to each other—even though they knew that both had said and heard them in that moment.

He approached, he took her in his arms, he kissed her mouth and held her for a long time. When she looked up at his face, he was smiling down at her confidently, derisively. It was a smile that told her he was in control of himself, of her, of everything, and ordered her to forget what she had seen in that first moment. “Hi, Dagny,” he said.

Feeling certain of nothing except that she must not ask questions, he smiled and said, “Hi, Frisco.”

She could have understood any change, but not the things she saw. There was no sparkle of life in his face, no hint of amusement; the face had become implacable. The plea of his first smile had not been a plea of weakness, he had acquired an air of determination that seemed merciless. He acted like a man who stood straight, under the weight of an unendurable burden. She saw what she could not have believed possible—that there were lines of bitterness in his face and that he looked tortured.

“Dagny, don’t be astonished by anything I do,” he said, “or by anything I may ever do in the future.”

That was the only explanation he granted her, then proceeded to act as if there were nothing to explain.

She could feel no more than a faint, intangible, ungraspable  
to  
the  
the

The dinner was served in his room. She found it amusing to face him across a table laid out with the icy formality pertaining to excessive cost, in a hotel room designed as a European palace.

The Wayne-Falkland was the most distinguished hotel left on any continent. Its style of indolent luxury, of velvet drapes, sculptured panels and candlelight, seemed a deliberate contrast to its function. No one could afford its hospitality except men who came to New York on business, to settle transactions involving the world. She

noticed that the manner of the waiters who served their dinner suggested a special deference to this particular guest of the hotel, and that Francisco did not notice it. He was indifferently at home. He had long since become accustomed to the fact that he was Senator d'Anconia of d'Anconia Copper.

But she thought it strange that he did not speak about his work. She had expected it to be his only interest—the first thing he would share with her. He did not mention it. He led her to talk instead, about her job, her progress, and what she felt for Taggart Transcontinental. She spoke of it as she had always spoken to him, in the knowledge that he was the only one who could understand her passionate devotion. He made no comment, but he listened intently.

A waiter had turned on the radio for dinner music; they had paid no attention to it. But suddenly a crash of sound jarred the room almost as if a subterranean blast had struck the walls and made them tremble. The shock came not from the loudness but from the quality of the sounds. It was Halley's new Concerto recently written—the Fourth.

They sat in silence, listening to the statement of rebellion—the anthem of the triumph of the great victims who would refuse to accept pain. Francisco listened, looking out at the city.

Without transition or warning, he asked, his voice oddly understressed, "Dagny, what would you say if I asked you to leave Taggart Transcontinental and let it go to hell, as it will when your brother takes over?"

"What would I say if you asked me to consider the idea of committing suicide?" she answered angrily.

He remained silent.

"Why did you say that?" she snapped. "I didn't think you'd joke about it. It's not like you."

There was no touch of humor in his face. He answered quietly, gravely, "No. Of course I shouldn't."

She brought herself to question him about his work. He answered the questions; he volunteered nothing. She repeated to him the comments of the industrialists about the brilliant prospects of d'Anconia Copper under his management. "That's true," he said, his voice lifeless.

In sudden anxiety, not knowing what prompted her, she asked, "Francisco, why did you come to New York?"

He answered slowly, "To see a friend who called for me."

"Business?"

Looking past her, as if answering a thought of his own, a faint smile of bitter amusement on his face, but his voice strangely soft and sad, he answered:

"Yes."

It was long past midnight when she awakened in bed by his side. No sounds came from the city below. The stillness of the room made life seem suspended for a while. Relaxed in happiness at complete exhaustion, she turned lazily to glance at him. He lay on his back, half-propped by a pillow. She saw his profile against the

gray glow of the night sky in the window. He was awake, his eyes

"You."

"Why should—"

"And everything."

"Why should you give it up?"

"Dagny! Help me to remain. To refuse. Even though he's right!"

She asked evenly, "To refuse what, Francisco?"

He did not answer, only pressed his face harder against her. She lay very still, conscious of nothing but a supreme need of union. His head on her breast, her hand caressing his hair gently, sadly, she lay looking up at the ceiling of the room, at the captured garlands faintly visible in the darkness, and she waited, numb with terror.

He moaned, "It's right, but it's so hard to do! Oh God, it's so

hard!"

After a while, he raised his head. He sat up. He had stopped

stumbling.

"What is it, Francisco?"

"I can't tell you."

His voice was simple, open, without attempt to

conceal suffering, but it was a voice that obeyed him now. "You're

ready to hear it."

"I want to help you."

"You can't."

"You said, to help you refuse."

"I can't refuse."

"Then let me share it with you."

He shook his head.

He sat looking down at her, as if weighing a question. Then he

looked his head again in answer to himself.

"If I'm not sure I can stand it," he said, and the strange new note

in his voice was tenderness. "How could you?"

She said slowly, with effort, trying to keep herself from scream-

ing. "Francisco, I have to know."

"Will you forgive me? I know you're frightened, and it's cruel.

But will you do this for me—will you let it go, just let it go, and

don't ask me anything?"

"I—"

"That's all you can do for me. Will you?"

"Yes, Francisco."

"Don't be afraid for me. It was just this once. It won't happen

to me again. It will become much easier . . . later."

"If I could—"

"No Go to sleep, dearest"

It was the first time he had ever used that word.

In the morning, he faced her openly, not avoiding her anxious glance, but saying nothing about it. She saw both serenity and suffering in the calm of his face, an expression like a smile of pain, though he was not smiling. Strangely, it made him look younger. He did not look like a man bearing torture now, but like a man who sees that which makes the torture worth bearing.

She did not question him. Before leaving, she asked only, "When will I see you again?"

He answered, "I don't know. Don't wait for me, Dagny. Next time we meet, you will not want to see me. I will have a reason for the things I'll do. But I can't tell you the reason and you will be right to damn me. I am not committing the contemptible act of asking you to take me on faith. You have to live by your own knowledge and judgment. You will damn me. You will be hurt. Try not to let it hurt you too much. Remember that I told you this and that it was all I could tell you."

She heard nothing from him or about him for a year. When she began to hear gossip and to read newspaper stories, she did not believe, at first, that they referred to Francisco d'Anconia. After a while, she had to believe it.

She read the story of the party he gave on his yacht, in the harbor of Valparaiso, the guests wore bathing suits, and an artificial rain of champagne and flower petals kept falling upon the decks throughout the night.

She read the story of the party he gave at an Algerian desert resort, he built a pavilion of thin sheets of ice and presented every woman guest with an ermine wrap, as a gift to be worn for the occasion, on condition that they remove their wraps, then their evening gowns, then all the rest, in tempo with the melting of the walls.

She read the accounts of the business ventures he undertook at lengthy intervals. The ventures were spectacularly successful and

ment of his employees

She read the interview where he said, "Why should I wish to make money? I have enough to permit three generations of descendants

again

She survived it. She was able to survive it, because she did not believe in suffering. She faced with astonished indignation the ugly fact of feeling pain, and refused to let it matter. Suffering was an accident, it was not part of life as she saw it. She would not

allow pain to become important. She had no name for the kind of resistance she offered, for the emotion from which the resistance came, but the words that stood as its equivalent in her mind were It does not count—it is not to be taken seriously. She knew these were the words, even in the moments when there was nothing left within her but screaming and she wished she could lose the faculty of consciousness so that it would not tell her that what could not be true was true. Not to be taken seriously—an immovable certainty within her kept repeating—pain and ugliness are never to be taken seriously.

She fought it. She recovered. Years helped her to reach the day when she could face her memories indifferently, then the day when she felt no necessity to face them. It was finished and of no concern to her.

work. Once, Francisco had given her the same sense, a feeling that belonged with her work and in her world. The men she had met since were like the men she met at her first ball.

She had won the battle against her memories. But one form of torture remained, untouched by the years, the torture of the word "why?"

Whatever the tragedy he met, why had Francisco taken the ghastly way of escape, as ignoble as the way of some cheap alcoholic? The boy she had known could not have become a useless coward. In incomparable mind could not turn its ingenuity to the invention of melting ballrooms. Yet he had and did, and there was no explanation to make it conceivable and to let her forget him in peace. She could not doubt the fact of what he had been. She could not doubt the fact of what he had become, yet one made the other impossible. At times, she almost doubted her own rationality or the existence of any rationality anywhere. But this was a doubt which she did not permit to anyone. Yet there was no explanation, no reason, no clue to any conceivable reason—and in all the days of ten years she had found no hint of an answer.

No, she thought—as she walked through the gray twilight, past the windows of abandoned shops, to the Wayne Falkland Hotel—there could be no answer. She would not seek it. It did not matter now.

The remnant of violence, the emotion rising as a thin trembling within her, was not for the man she was going to see, was a cry of protest against a sacrilege—against the destruction of what had been greatness.

In a break between buildings, she saw the towers of the Wayne Falkland. She felt a slight jolt, in her lungs and legs, that stopped her for an instant. Then she walked on evenly.

By the time she walked through the marble lobby, to the elevator, then down the wide, velvet-carpeted, soundless corridors of the Wayne Falkland, she felt nothing but a cold anger that with every step



She was certain of the anger when she knocked at his door. She heard his voice answering "Come in." She jerked the door open and entered.

Francisco Domingo Carlos Andres Sebastián d'Anconia sat on the floor playing marbles.

Nobody ever wondered whether Francisco d'Anconia was good looking or not; it seemed irrelevant when he entered a room; it was impossible to look at anyone else. His tall slender figure had an air of distinction too authentic to be modern, and he moved as if he had a cape floating behind him in the wind. People explained him by saying that he had the vitality of a healthy animal, but they knew dimly that that was not correct. He had the vitality of a healthy human being—a thing so rare that no one could identify it. He had the power of certainty.

Nobody described his appearance as Latin, yet the word applied to him not in its present but in its original sense, not pertaining to Spain but to ancient Rome. His body seemed designed as an exercise in consistency of style, a style made of gauntness, of tight flesh, long legs and swift movements. His features had the fine precision of sculpture. His hair was black and straight, swept back. The suntan of his skin was a deep, warm, golden-brown. His eyes were a pure, clear blue, expression reflecting what he thought.

He sat on the floor of his drawing room, dressed in sleepwear, pajamas of thin black silk. The marbles spread on the carpet around him were made of the semi-precious stones of his native country: carnelian and rock crystal. He did not rise when Dagny entered. He sat looking up at her, and a crystal marble fell like a teardrop out of his hand. He smiled, the unchanged, insolent brilliant smile of his childhood.

"Hi, Slug!"

She heard herself answering irresistibly, helplessly, happily.

"Hi, Frisco!"

She was looking at his face; it was the face she had known. It bore no mark of the kind of life he had led, nor of what she had seen on their last night together. There was no sign of tragedy or bitterness, no tension—only the radiant meekness, matured and stressed the look of dangerously unpredictable amusement, and the great, impossible thing.

His eyes, slapping off, looked like an ice uniform.

"If you came here dressed like this, how lovely you are," he said, "I wish I could tell you what urgent though a woman's need, not what you came here for."

The words were improper in so many ways, yet were said so lightly that they brought her back to reality to anger and to the purpose of her visit. She remained standing looking down at him, her face blank, refusing him any recognition of the personal even of its power to offend her. She said, I came here to ask you a question."

"Go ahead."

"When you told those reporters that you came to New York to witness the farce which farce did you mean?"

He laughed aloud, like a man who seldom finds a chance to enjoy the unexpected.

"That's what I like about you, Dagny. There are seven million people in the city of New York, at present. Out of seven million people you are the only one to whom it could have occurred that I wasn't talking about the Vail divorce scandal."

"What were you talking about?"

"What alternative occurred to you?"

"The San Sebastián disaster."

"That's much more amusing than the Vail divorce scandal isn't it?"

She said in the solemn, merciless tone of a prosecutor "You did it consciously, cold bloodedly and with full intention."

"Don't you think it would be better if you took your coat off and at down?"

She knew she had made a mistake by betraying too much in enmity. She turned coldly removed her coat and threw it aside. He did not rise to help her. She sat down in an armchair. He remained on the floor, at some distance, but it seemed as if he were sitting at her feet.

"What was it I did with full intention?" he asked.

"The entire San Sebastián swindle."

"What was my full intention?"

"That is what I want to know."

He chuckled, as if she had asked him to explain in conversation a complex science requiring a lifetime of study.

"You knew that the San Sebastián mines were worthless," she said. "You knew it before you began the whole wretched business."

"Then why did I begin it?"

"Don't start telling me that you gained nothing. I know it. I know you lost fifteen million dollars of your own money. Yet it was done on purpose."

"Can you think of a motive that would prompt me to do it?"

"No. It's inconceivable."

"Is it? You assume that I have a great mind, a great knowledge and a great productive ability so that anything I undertake must necessarily be successful. And then you claim that I had no desire to put out my best effort for the People's State of Mexico. Inconceivable, isn't it?"

"You knew before you bought that property, that Mexico was in the hands of a looters government. You didn't have to start a mining project for them."

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WALSH, J. J.

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"Hi Frisco!"

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His eyes were studying her the battered coat thrown open, half slipping off her shoulders and the slender body in a gray suit that looked like an office uniform.

"If you came here dressed like this in order not to let me notice how lovely you are," he said, "you miscalculated. You're lovely. I wish I could tell you what a relief it is to see a face that's intelligent though a woman's. But you don't want to hear it. That's not what you came here for."

they overlooked. They thought it was safe to ride on my brain, because they assumed that the goal of my journey was wealth. All their calculations rested on the premise that I wanted to make money. What if I didn't?

"If you didn't, what did you want?"

"They never asked me that. Not to inquire about my aims, motives or desires is an essential part of their theory."

"If you didn't want to make money, what possible motive could you have had?"

"Any number of them. For instance to spend it."

"To spend money on a certain total failure?"

"How was I to know that those mines were a certain, total failure?"

"How could you help knowing it?"

"Quite simply. By giving it no thought."

"You started that project without giving it any thought?"

"No, not exactly. But suppose I slipped up? I'm only human. I made a mistake. I failed. I made a bad job of it." He flicked his wrist, a crystal marble shot sparkling across the floor and cracked violently against a brown one at the other end of the room.

"I don't believe it," she said.

"No? But haven't I the right to be what is now accepted as human? Should I pay for everybody's mistakes and never be permitted one of my own?"

"That's not like you."

"No?" He stretched himself full length on the carpet lazily, relaxed.

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

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"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"No?"

"I've looked as he did. The capacity for unclouded enjoyment, she thought, does not belong to irresponsible fools. An inviolate peace of spirit is not the achievement of a drifter; to be able to laugh like that is the end result of the most profound, most solemn thinking.

Almost dispassionately, looking at his figure stretched on the carpet at her feet, she observed what memory it brought back to her. The black pajamas stressed the long lines of his body. The open collar showed a smooth, young sunburned skin—and she thought of the figure in black slacks and shirt stretched beside her on the grass at sunrise. She had felt pride then, the pride of knowing that she owned his body, she still felt it. She remembered suddenly, specifically the . . .

"Memory should still

Unaccountably, by an association of feeling that astonished her, she remembered what had conveyed to her recently the same sense of consummate joy as his

"Francisco she heard herself saying softly, "we both loved the music of Richard Halley . . ."

I still love it

"Have you ever met him?"

"Yes Why?"

"Do you happen to know whether he has written a Fifth Concerto?"

He remained perfectly still. She had thought him impervious to shock, he wasn't. But she could not attempt to guess why of all the things she had said this should be the first to reach him. It was only an instant, then he asked evenly, "What makes you think he has?"

"Well has he?"

"You know that there are only four Halley Concertos."

"Yes. But I wondered whether he had written another one."

"He has stopped writing."

"I know."

"Then what . . ."

"

you . . . e is he? What made

" . . . but say there was I merely wondered about it."

"Why did you think of Richard Halley just now?"

"Because"—she felt her control cracking a little—"because my mind can't make the leap from Richard Halley's music to . . . to Mrs. Gilbert Vail."

He laughed, relieved. "Oh that? . . . Incidentally, if you've been following my publicity have you noticed a funny little discrepancy in the story of Mrs. Gilbert Vail?"

"I don't read the stuff."

"You should. She gave such a beautiful description of last New Year's Eve, which we spent together in my villa in the Andes. The moonlight on the mountain peaks, and the blood-red flowers hanging on vines in the open windows. See anything wrong in the picture?"

She said quietly, "It's I who should ask you that, and I'm not going to."

"Oh, I see nothing wrong—"

" . . . "

" . . . "

" . . . your brother James and the 'Senor

Orren Boyle."

She gasped, remembering that this was true, remembering also that she had seen Mrs. Vail's story in the newspapers.

"Francisco what . . . what does that mean?"

He chuckled. "Draw your own conclusions . . . Dagny"—his face was serious—"why did you think of Halley writing a Fifth

certo? Why not a new symphony or opera? Why specifically a concerto?"

"Why does that disturb you?"

"It doesn't," He added softly, "I still love his music, Dagny." Then spoke lightly again "But it belonged to another age. Our age provides a different kind of entertainment."

People's State of Mexico in regard to the San Sebastián Mines?

He laughed, lying flat on his back. His arms were thrown wide on the carpet, forming a cross with his body, he seemed disarmed, aged and young.

"It was worth whatever it cost me. I could afford the price of it. I know. If I had stopped to think, I could have beaten the market—compared to

and sat shaking his hand absently in his hand, they clicked with the soft clear sound of good stone. She realized suddenly that playing with those marbles was not a deliberate affectation on his part, it was restlessness, he would not remain inactive for long.

"The program of the new government," he issued a decree, and put up his fortune, central

Planning Council. It was to raise everybody's standard of living and provide a roast of pork every Sunday for every man, woman, child and abortion in the People's State of Mexico. Now the planners were asking their people not to blame the government, but to blame the depravity of the rich, because I turned out to be an irresponsible playboy, instead of the greedy capitalist I was expected to be. How were they to know, they're asking that I would let them down? Well, true enough. How were they to know it?"

She noticed the way he fingered the marbles in his hand. He was not conscious of it, he was looking off into some grim distance, but she felt certain that the action was a relief to him, perhaps as a contrast. His fingers were moving slowly, feeling the texture of the stones with sensual enjoyment. Instead of finding it crude, she found it strangely attractive—as if, she thought suddenly, as if sensuality were not physical at all, but came from a fine discrimination of the spirit.

"And that's not all they didn't know," he said. "They're in some more knowledge. There's that housing settlement for workers of San Sebastián. It cost eight million dollars.

houses with plumbing electricity and refrigeration. Also a school a church, a hospital and a movie theater. A settlement built for people who had lived in hovels made of driftwood and stray tin cans. My reward for building it was to be the privilege of escaping with my skin a special concession due to the accident of my not being a native of the People's State of Mexico. That workers settlement was also part of their plans. A model example of progressive State housing. Well those steel frame houses are mainly cardboard with a coating of good imitation shellac. They won't stand another year. The plumbing pipes—as well as most of our mining equipment—were purchased from dealers whose main source of supply are the city dumps of Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. I'd give those pipes another five months and the electric system about six. The wonderful roads we graded up four thousand feet of rock for the People's State of Mexico will not last beyond a couple of winters. They're cheap cement without foundation and the bracing at the bad turns is just painted clapboard. Wait for one good mountain slide. The church, I think, will stand. They'll need it."

"Francisco?" she whispered. "Did you do it on purpose?"

He raised his head. She was startled to see that his face had a look of infinite weariness. "Whether I did it on purpose," he said, "or through neglect or through stupidity doesn't you understand that that doesn't make any difference? The same element was missing."

She was trembling. Against all her decisions and control she cried, "Francisco! If you see what's happening in the world if you understand all the things you said you can't laugh about it! You of all men you should fight them!"

"Whom?"

"The looters and those who make world looting possible. The Mexican planners and their kind."

His smile had a dangerous edge. "No, my dear. It's you that I have to fight."

She looked at him blankly. "What are you trying to say?"

"I am saying that the workers' settlement of San Sebastian cost eight million dollars," he answered with slow emphasis. "It was hard. The price paid for those cardboard houses was the price that could have bought steel structures. So was the price paid for every other item. That money went to men who grow rich by such methods. Such men do not remain rich for long. The money will go into channels which will carry it not to the most productive but to the most corrupt. By the standards of our time the man who has the least to offer is the man who wins. That money will vanish in projects such as the San Sebastian Mines."

She asked with effort, "Is that what you're after?"

"Yes."

"Is that what you find amusing?"

"Yes."

"I am thinking of your name," she said while another part of her mind was crying to her that reproaches were useless. "It was

tion of your family that a d'Anconia always left a fortune  
ter than the one he received."

Oh yes, my ancestors had a remarkable ability for doing the  
thing at the right time—and for making the right invest  
its. Of course, "investment" is a relative term. It depends on  
it you wish to accomplish. For instance, look at San Sebastián

sequences. That's not a bad return on an investment, is it,  
my?"

He was sitting straight. "Do you realize what you're saying?"  
Oh fully! Shall I beat you to it and name the consequences  
were going to reproach me for? First, I don't think that Taggart  
continental will recover from its loss on that preposterous  
Sebastián Lane. You think it will, but it won't. Second, the  
Sebastián helped your brother James to destroy the Phoenix  
rango which was about the only good railroad left anywhere."

"You realize all that?"

"And a great deal more."

"Do you?"—she did not know why she had to say it, except that  
memory of the face with the dark, violent eyes seemed to stare  
her—"do you know Ellis Wyatt?"

"Sure."

"Do you know what this might do to him?"

"Yes. He's the one who's going to be wiped out next."

"Do you find that . . . amusing?"

"Much more amusing than the ruin of the Mexican planners."

She stood up. She had called him corrupt for years; she had  
used it, she had thought about it, she had tried to forget it and  
yet think of it again, but she had never suspected how far the  
ruption had gone.

She was not looking at him; she did not know that she was saying  
aloud, quoting his words of the past: " . . . who'll do greater  
honor, you—to Nat Taggart, or I—to Sebastián d'Anconia."

"But didn't you realize that I named those mines in honor of  
my great ancestor? I think it was a tribute which he would have  
valued."

It took her a moment to recover her eyesight; she had never  
known what was meant by blasphemy or what one felt on en  
unciating it, she knew it now.

He had . . . . . it was

. . . . . c what

"I came here because I wanted to know the reason for what  
you've done with your life," she said tonelessly, without anger.

"I have told you the reason," he answered gravely, "but you don't  
want to believe it."

"I kept seeing you as you were. I couldn't forget . . . you



should have become what you are—that does not belong in a rational universe "

"No? And the world as you see it around you, does?"

"You were not the kind of man who gets broken by any kind of world "

"True "

"Then—why?"

He shrugged "Who is John Galt?"

"Oh, don't use gutter language!"

He glanced at her His lips held the hint of a smile, but his eyes were still, earnest and, for an instant, disturbingly perceptive.

Why? she repeated

He answered, as he had answered in the night, in this hotel, ten years ago, "You're not ready to hear it "

He did not follow her to the door She had put her hand on the doorknob when she turned—and stopped He stood across the room, looking at her, it was a glance directed at her whole person; she knew its meaning and it held her motionless

"I still want to sleep with you," he said "But I am not a man who is happy enough to do it "

Not happy enough? she repeated in complete bewilderment.

He laughed "Is it proper that that should be the first thing you'd answer?" He waited, but she remained silent "You want it, too don't you?"

She was about to answer "No," but realized that the truth was worse than that "Yes," she answered coldly, "but it doesn't matter to me that I want it."

He smiled, in open appreciation, acknowledging the strength she had needed to say it

But he was not smiling when he said, as she opened the door to leave, "You have a great deal of courage, Dagny Some day you'll have enough of it."

"Of what? Courage?"

But he did not answer.

## Chapter VI THE NON COMMERCIAL

Rearden pressed his forehead to the mirror and tried not to think

That was the only way he could go through with it, he told himself He concentrated on the relief of the mirror's cool touch, wondering how one went about forcing one's mind to blankness, particularly after a lifetime lived on the axiom that the constant, clearest, most ruthless function of his rational faculty was his foremost duty He wondered why no effort had ever seem

me, ■ he attended to every duty on his overloaded schedule  
hen, during three months of eighteen-hour workdays, he had for-  
otten it happily—until half an hour ago, when, long past dinner  
me, his secretary had entered his office and said firmly, "Your  
arty, Mr Rearden" He had cried, "Good God! leaping to his  
et he had he tried he had reached on the city of London

down that business was regarded as some sort of secret, shameful  
people  
never  
sensi-  
hands

Before coming home, so one was supposed to wash the stain of  
business off one's mind before entering a drawing room He had  
never held that creed, but he had accepted it as natural that his  
family should hold it He took it for granted—wordlessly, in  
the manner of a feeling absorbed in childhood, left unquestioned  
and unnamed—that he had dedicated himself, like the martyr of  
some dark religion, to the service of a faith which was his passionate  
love, but which made him an outcast among men, whose sympathy  
he was not to expect.

He had accepted the tenet that it was his duty to give his wife  
some form of existence unrelated to business But he had never  
found the capacity to do it or even to experience a sense of guilt.  
He could neither force himself to change nor blame her if she  
chose to condemn him.

He had given Lillian none of his time for months—no, he  
thought, for years; for the eight years of their marriage. He had no  
interest to spare for her interests, not even enough to learn just  
what they were. She had a large circle of friends, and he had heard  
it said that their names represented the heart of the country's  
culture, but he had never had time to meet them or even to acknowl-  
edge their fame by knowing what achievements had earned it He  
knew only that he often saw their names on the magazine covers  
on newsstands If I am interested in the attitude he then felt the same

elect. . . Just a few more minutes, he thought,  
against the mirror, his eyes closed.  
He could not stop in his mind that went on  
words at him it was plug a broken

bare hands stinging jets, part words, part pictures, kept shooting at his brain. Hours of it, he thought, hours to spend watching the eyes of the guests getting heavy with boredom if they were sober or glazing into an imbecile stare if they weren't and pretend that he noticed neither, and strain to think of something to say to them, when he had nothing to say—while he needed hours of inquiry to find a successor for the superintendent of his rolling mills who had resigned suddenly, without explanation—he had to do it at once—men of that sort were so hard to find—and if anything happened to break the flow of the rolling mills—it was the Taggart rail that was being rolled.

He remembered the silent reproach the look of accusation, long bearing patience and scorn, which he always saw in the eyes of his family when they caught some evidence of his passion for his business—and the futility of his silence, of his hope that they would not think Rearden Steel meant as much to him as it did—like a drunkard pretending indifference to liquor, among people who watch him with the scornful amusement of their full knowledge of his shameful weakness.

"I heard you last night coming home at two in the morning, where were you?" his mother saying to him at the dinner table and Lillian answering "Why, at the mills of course," as another would say, "At the corner saloon." Or Lillian asking him the hint of a wise half-smile on her face, "What were you doing?"

think he had attended some sort of obscene stag party. One carrier had gone down in a storm on Lake Michigan with thousands of tons of Rearden ore—those boats were falling apart if he didn't take it upon himself to help them obtain the replacements they needed, the owners of the line would go bankrupt, and there was no other line left in operation on Lake Michigan.

"That nook?" said Lillian, pointing to an arrangement of settees and coffee tables in their drawing room. "Why, no, Henry, it's new, but I suppose I should feel flattered that three weeks it took you to notice it. It's my own adaptation of the morning room of a famous French palace—but things like that can't possibly interest you, darling, there's no stock market quotation in them, none whatever." The order for copper, which he had placed six months ago, had not been delivered, the promised date had been postponed three times.

A speech he was making to some of his new mothers about some organization he had joined, but there was something that gave him loose muscles of his face when this, it's not business Henry, non-commercial endeavor. The job of rebuilding a large factory, was considering structural shapes of Rearden Metal—he should fly to Detroit and speak to



He had told himself that the issue was dangerous. But the loudest screaming of the most hysterical editorial roused no emotion in him—while a variation of a decimal point in a laboratory report on a test of Rearden Metal made him leap to his feet in eagerness or apprehension. He had no energy to spare for anything else.

He crumpled the editorial and threw it into the wastebasket. He felt the leaden approach of that exhaustion which he never felt in his job the exhaustion that seemed to wait for him and catch him the moment he turned to other concerns. He felt as if he were incapable of any desire except a desperate longing for sleep.

He told himself that he had to attend the party—that his family had the right to demand it of him—that he had to learn to live their kind of pleasure for their sake not his own.

He wondered why this was a motive that had no power to impel him. Throughout his life whenever he became convinced that a course of action was right the desire to follow it had come automatically. What was happening to him?—he wondered. The unlikely possibility of feeling reluctance to do that which was right wasn't it the basic formula of moral corruption? To recognize one's guilt yet feel nothing but the coldest most profound indifference—wasn't it a betrayal of that which had been the motor of his life-course and of his pride?

He gave himself no time to seek an answer. He finished dressing quickly, pitilessly.

Holding himself erect, his tall figure moving with the unstrained confidence of habitual authority, the white of a handkerchief in the breast pocket of his black dinner jacket walked slowly down the stairs to the drawing room looking—the satisfaction of the dowagers who watched him—like the perfect figure of a great industrialist.

He saw Lillian at the foot of the stairs. The patrician lines in lemon yellow Empire evening gown stressed her graceful body. She stood like a person proudly in control of her proper background. He smiled; he liked to see her happy, it gave some reasonable justification to the party.

He approached her—and stopped. She had always shown a taste in her use of jewelry never wearing too much of it. But tonight she wore an ostentatious display—a diamond necklace, earrings and brooches. Her arms looked conspicuously bare by contrast. On her right wrist as sole ornament she wore the bracelet of Rearden Metal. The glittering gems made it look like an ugly piece of dime-store jewelry.

When he moved his glance from her wrist to her face, he found her looking at him. Her eyes were narrowed and he could define their expression. It was a look that seemed both veiled and purposeful, the look of something hidden that flaunted its secret from detection.

He wanted to tear the bracelet off her wrist. Instead, in obedience to her voice gaily pronouncing an introduction, he bowed to the swager who stood beside her, his face expressionless.

"Man? What is man? He's just a collection of chemicals with illusions of grandeur," said Dr. Pritchett to a group of guests across the room.

Dr. Pritchett picked a canapé off a crystal dish, held it speared between two straight fingers and deposited it whole into his mouth.

"Man's metaphysical pretensions," he said, "are preposterous. A miserable bit of protoplasm, full of ugly little concepts and mean

ked

None, said Dr. Pritchett. None within the range of man's ability."

A young man asked hesitantly, "But if we haven't any good concepts, how do we know that the ones we've got are ugly? I mean, what standard?"

"There aren't any standards."

This silenced his audience.

"The philosophers of the past were superficial," Dr. Pritchett went on. "It remained for our century to redefine the purpose of philosophy. The purpose of philosophy is not to help men find the meaning of life, but to prove to them that there isn't any."

An attractive young woman, whose father owned a coal mine, looked indignantly, "Who can tell us that?"

"I am trying to," said Dr. Pritchett. For the last three years, he had been head of the Department of Philosophy at the Patrick Henry University.

Lillian Rearden approached, her jewels glittering under the lights. The expression on her face was held to the soft hint of a smile, set and faintly suggested, like the waves of her hair.

"It is this insistence of man upon meaning that makes him so difficult," said Dr. Pritchett. "Once he realizes that he is of no importance whatever in the vast scheme of the universe, that no noble significance can be attached to his activities, that it does not matter whether he lives or dies, he will become much more . . . tractable."

He shrugged and reached for another canapé. A businessman looked uneasily, "What I asked you about, Professor, was what you thought about the Equalization of Opportunity Bill."

"Oh, that?" said Dr. Pritchett. "But I believe I made it clear that I am in favor of it, because I am in favor of a free economy. A free economy cannot exist without competition. Therefore men must be forced to compete. Therefore, we must control men in order to force them to be free."

"But, look . . . isn't that sort of a contradiction?"

"Not in the higher philosophical sense. You must learn to go beyond the static definitions of old-fashioned thinking. Nothing is fixed in the universe. Everything is fluid."

"But it stands to reason that if—"

"Reason my dear fellow is the most naïve of all superstitions. That at least has been generally conceded in our age."

"But I don't quite understand how we can—"

"You suffer from the popular delusion of believing that things can be understood. You do not grasp the fact that the universe is a solid contradiction."

A contradiction of what?" asked the matron.

"Of itself."

"How . . . how's that?"

"My dear madam the duty of thinkers is not to explain, but to demonstrate that nothing can be explained."

"Yes of course . . . only . . ."

"The purpose of philosophy is not to seek knowledge, but to prove that knowledge is impossible to man."

"But when we prove it," asked the young woman, "what's going to be left?"

"Instinct," said Dr. Pritchett reverently.

At the other end of the room, a group was listening to Ralph Eubank. He sat upright on the edge of an armchair, in order to counteract the appearance of his face and figure, which had tendency to spread if relaxed.

"The literature of the past," said Ralph Eubank, "was a shallow fraud. It whitewashed life in order to please the money tycoon whom it served. Morality, free will, achievement, happy endings and man as some sort of heroic being—all that stuff is laughter to us. Our age has given depth to literature for the first time, exposing the real essence of life."

A very young girl in a white evening gown asked timidly, "What is the real essence of life, Mr. Eubank?"

"Suffering," said Ralph Eubank. "Defeat and suffering."

"But . . . but why? People are happy . . . sometimes . . . are they?"

"The . . . notions are superficial" . . . who had inherited an . . . we do to raise the poor . . .

"That is a great social problem," said Ralph Eubank. He . . . but had never written . . . copies. Personally . . . Bill applying to him . . .

"Do you approve of that Bill for industry? I'm not sure I know what to think of it."

"Certainly I approve of it. Our culture has sunk into a bog of materialism. Men have lost all spiritual values in their pursuit of material production and technological trickery. They're too comfortable. They will return to a nobler life if we teach them to suffer privations. So we ought to place a limit upon their material greed."

"I hadn't thought of it that way," said the woman apologetically.

"But how are you going to work an Equalization of Oppor-

for literature, Ralph?" asked Mort Laddy "That's a new one me."

My name is Ralph," said Eubank angrily "And it's a new one you because it's my own idea"

Okay, okay, I'm not quarreling, am I? I'm just asking" Mort dy smiled He spent most of his time smiling nervously He was a poser who wrote old fashioned scores for motion pictures, and fern symphonies for sparse audiences

It would work very simply," said Ralph Eubank "There should a law limiting the sale of any book to ten thousand copies s would throw the literary market open to new talent, fresh s and non-commercial writing If people were forbidden to buy sillion copies of the same piece of trash, they would be forced buy better books"

You've got something there," said Mort Laddy "But wouldn't e kinda tough on the writers' bank accounts?

So much the better Only those whose motive is not money-king should be allowed to write"

But, Mr Eubank, asked the young girl in the white dress, hat if more than ten thousand people want to buy a certain k?"

Ten thousand readers is enough for any book"

want it?"

said Ralph Eubank

temptuously

Dr Pritchett, on his way across the room to the bar stopped to , "Quite so Just as logic is a primitive vulgarity in philosophy"

"Just as melody is a primitive vulgarity in music," said Mort My

"What's all this noise?" asked Lillian Rearden glittering to a p beside them.

"Lillian, my angel," Ralph Eubank drawled, "did I tell you that i dedicating my new novel to you?"

"Why, thank you, darling"

"What is the name of your new novel?" asked the wealthy woman.

"*The Heart Is a Milkman*"

"What is it about?"

"Frustration"

"But, Mr Eubank," asked the young girl in the white dress, ashing desperately, "if everything is frustration what is there Eve for?"

"Brother love," said Ralph Eubank grimly

Bertram Scudder stood slouched against the bar His long thin ce looked as if it had shrunk inward, with the exception of his outh and eyeballs, which were left to protrude as three soft bes. He was the . . .

is writt-

Bertra

ward L . . .



drink noticed the empty glass in front of Philip Rearden, who stood beside him and jerked his thumb in a silent command to the bartender. He ignored the empty glass in front of Betty Pope, who stood at Philip's other side.

"Look bud," said Bertram Scudder, his eyeballs focused approvingly in the direction of Philip, "whether you like it or not the Equalization of Opportunity Bill represents a great step forward."

"What made you think that I did not like it, Mr. Scudder?" Philip asked humbly.

"Well, it's going to pinch, isn't it? The long arm of society is going to trim a little off the hors d'oeuvres bill around here. He waved his hand at the bar.

"Why do you assume that I object to that?"

"You don't?" Bertram Scudder asked without curiosity.

"I don't!" said Philip hotly. "I have always placed the public

go  
on  
Ec  
on"

to  
Some people do take moral issues seriously, Mr. Scudder," said Philip with a gentle stress of pride in his voice.

"What's he talking about, Philip?" asked Betty Pope. "We don't know anybody who owns more than one business, do we?"

"Oh, p-p-p-e down!" said Bertram Scudder, his voice bored.

"I don't see why there's so much fuss about that Equalization of Opportunity Bill," said Betty Pope aggressively, in the tone of a  
businessmen object to it. If  
else is poor, they won't have  
stop being selfish and share  
ive a chance to work hard  
and produce some more."

"I do not see why industrialists should be considered at all," said Scudder. "When the masses are destitute and yet there are goods available, it's idiotic to expect people to be stopped by some scrap of paper called a property deed. Property rights are a superstition. One holds property only by the courtesy of those who do not see it. The people can seize it at any moment. If they can, why should they?"

"They should," said Claude Slagenhop. "They need it. Need is the only consideration. If people are in need, we've got to do things first and talk about it afterwards."

Claude Slagenhop had approached and managed to squeeze himself between Philip and Scudder, shoving Scudder aside unacceptably. Slagenhop was not tall or heavy, but he had a squat compact bulk and a broken nose. He was the president of Friends of Global Progress.

"Hunger won't wait," said Claude Slagenhop. "Ideas are just air. An empty belly is a solid fact. I've said in all my speeches that

not necessary to talk too much. Society is suffering for lack of  
ness opportunities at the moment, so we've got the right to  
e such opportunities as exist. Right is whatever's good for  
ety."

without expression.

Oh, dear me!" said Betty Pope, remembering  
Frank Rearden stood at a window in a dim recess at the end of  
drawing room. He hoped no one would notice him for a few  
minutes. He had just escaped from a middle-aged woman who had  
been telling him about her psychic experiences. He stood looking  
out. Far in the distance, the red glow of Rearden Steel moved in  
the sky. He watched it for a moment's relief.

oyment.

He looked at the flowers, at the sparks of light on the crystal  
chandeliers, at the naked arms and shoulders of women. There was a cold  
blue outside, sweeping empty stretches of land. He saw the thin  
branches of a tree being twisted, like arms waving in an appeal for  
help. The tree stood against the glow of the mills.

He could not name his sudden emotion. He had no words to  
describe its cause, its quality, its meaning. Some part of it was joy, but  
it was solemn like the act of baring one's head—he did not know  
whom.

When he stepped back into the crowd, he was smiling. But the  
smile vanished abruptly, he saw the entrance of a new guest. It was  
Dagny Taggart.

Lillian moved forward to meet her, studying her with curiosity  
she had met before, on infrequent occasions, and she found it  
strange to see Dagny Taggart wearing an evening gown. It was a  
black dress with a bodice that fell as a cape over one arm and  
shoulder, leaving the other bare, the naked shoulder was the gown's  
only ornament. Seeing her in the suits she wore, one never thought  
of Dagny Taggart's body. The black dress seemed excessively re-  
markable—because it was astonishing to discover that the lines of  
her shoulder were fragile and beautiful, and that the diamond  
set on the wrist of her naked arm gave her the most feminine of  
all aspects—the look of being chained.

"Miss Taggart, it is such a wonderful surprise to see you here!"  
said Lillian Rearden, the muscles of her face performing the motions  
of a smile. "I had not really dared to hope that an invitation from  
me would take you away from your ever so much weightier con-  
cerns. Do permit me to feel flattered."

James Taggart had entered with his sister Lillian smiled at him in the manner of a hasty postscript, as if noticing him for the first time

"Hello James That's your penalty for being popular—one tends to lose sight of you in the surprise of seeing your sister"

"No one can match you in popularity, Lillian," he answered smiling thinly "nor ever lose sight of you"

"Me? Oh but I am quite resigned to taking second place in the shadow of my husband I am humbly aware that the wife of a great man has to be contented with reflected glory—don't you think Miss Taggart?"

No said Dagny "I don't."

"Is this a compliment or a reproach, Miss Taggart? But do forgive me if I confess I'm helpless Whom may I present to you? I'm afraid I have nothing but writers and artists to offer, and they wouldn't interest you I'm sure"

"I'd like to find Hank and say hello to him"

"But of course James, do you remember you said you wanted to meet Ralph Eubank?—oh yes, he's here—I'll tell him that I hear you rave about his last novel at Mrs Whitecomb's dinner!"

Walking across the room Dagny wondered why she had not that she wanted to find Hank Rearden, what had prevented her from admitting that she had seen him the moment she entered

Rearden stood at the other end of the long room looking at her He watched her as she approached, but he did not step forward to meet her

"Hello Hank"

"Good evening"

He bowed courteously, impersonally, the movement of his bow matching the distinguished formality of his clothes He did not smile

"Thank you for inviting me tonight" she said gaily.

"I cannot claim that I knew you were coming"

"Oh? Then I'm glad that Mrs Rearden thought of me I want to make an exception"

"Ah—"

The formality of his manner was so unexpected that she was unable to adjust to it "I wanted to celebrate" she said

"To celebrate my wedding anniversary?"

"Oh, is it your wedding anniversary? I didn't know My congratulations Hank"

"What did you wish to celebrate?"

"I thought I'd permit myself a rest A celebration of my own honor and mine"

"For what reason?"

She was thinking of the new track on the rocky grades of Colorado mountains growing slowly toward the distant goal of the Wyatt oil fields She was seeing the greenish blue glow of

als on the frozen ground, among the dried weeds, the naked  
oulders, the rotting shanties of half-starved settlements.

"In honor of the first sixty miles of Rearden Metal track," she  
answered.

"I appreciate it." The tone of his voice was the one that would  
have been proper if he had said, "I've never heard of it."

She found nothing else to say. She felt as if she were speaking  
to a stranger.

"Why, Miss Taggart!" a cheerful voice broke their silence. "Now  
this is what I mean when I say that Hank Rearden can achieve any  
miracle!"

A businessman whom they knew had approached, smiling at her  
with delighted astonishment. The three of them had often held  
emergency conferences about freight rates and steel deliveries. Now  
he looked at her, his face an open comment on the change in her  
appearance, the change, she thought, which Rearden had not  
noticed.

She laughed, answering the man's greeting, giving herself no time  
to recognize the unexpected stab of disappointment, the unadmitted  
thought that she wished she had seen this look on Rearden's face,  
instead. She exchanged a few sentences with the man. When she  
glanced around, Rearden was gone.

"So that is your famous sister?" said Ralph Eubank to James  
Taggart, looking at Dagny across the room.

"I was not aware that my sister was famous," said Taggart, a faint  
note in his voice.

"But, my good man, she's an unusual phenomenon in the field  
of economics, so you must expect people to talk about her. Your  
sister is a symptom of the illness of our century. A decadent product  
of the machine age. Machines have destroyed man's humanity, taken  
him away from the soil, robbed him of his natural arts, killed his  
soul and turned him into a . . ."

Rearden.

"Say, Hank Rearden, you're not such a bad fellow at all when  
seen close up in the lion's own den. You ought to give us a press  
conference once in a while, you'd win us over."

Rearden turned and looked at the speaker incredulously. It was  
a young newspaperman of the seedier sort who worked on a radical  
tabloid. The offensive familiarity of his manner seemed to imply  
that he chose to be rude to Rearden because he knew that Rearden  
should never have permitted himself to associate with a man of  
his kind.

Rearden would not have allowed him inside the mills, but the man  
was Lillian's guest, he controlled himself. He asked dryly, "What do  
you want?"

"You're not so bad. You've got talent. Technological  
of course, I don't agree with you about Rearden Metal."

"I haven't asked you to agree."

"Well, Bertram Scudder said that your policy—" the man started belligerently, pointing toward the bar, but stopped, as if he had slid farther than he intended.

Rearden looked at the untidy figure slouched against the bar. Lillian had introduced them, but he had paid no attention to the name. He turned sharply and walked off, in a manner that forbade the young bum to tag him.

Lillian glanced up at his face, when Rearden approached her in the midst of a group, and, without a word, stepped aside where they could not be heard.

"Is that Scudder of *The Future*?" he asked, pointing.

"Why, yes."

He looked at her silently, unable to begin to believe it, unable to find the lead of a thought with which to begin to understand. Her eyes were watching him.

"How could you invite him here?" he asked.

"Now, Henry, don't let's be ridiculous. You don't want me to be narrow minded, do you? You must learn to tolerate the opinion of others and respect their right of free speech."

"In my house?"

"Oh, don't be stuffy!"

He did not speak, because his consciousness was held, not by coherent statements, but by two pictures that seemed to glare at him insistently. He saw the article, "The Octopus," by Bertram Scudder, which was not an expression of ideas, but a bucket of slime emptied in public—an article that did not contain a single fact, not even an invented one, but poured a stream of sneers and adjectives in which nothing was clear except the filthy malice denouncing without considering proof necessary. And he saw the lines of Lillian's profile, the proud purity which he had sought in marrying her.

When he noticed her again, he realized that the vision of her profile was in his own mind, because she was turned to him full face watching him. In the sudden instant of returning to reality he thought that what he saw in her eyes was enjoyment. But in the next instant he reminded himself that he was sane and that this was not possible.

"It's the first time you've invited that . . ." he used an obscure word with unemotional precision, "to my house. It's the last."

"How dare you use such—"

"Don't argue, Lillian. If you do, I'll throw him out right now."

He gave her a moment to answer, to object, to scream at him as she wished. She remained silent, not looking at him, only her smooth cheeks seemed faintly drawn inward, as if deflated.

Moving blindly away through the coils of lights, voices and perfume, he felt a cold touch of dread. He knew that he should think of Lillian and find the answer to the riddle of her character because this was a revelation which he could not ignore, but he did not think of her—and he felt the dread because he knew that the answer had ceased to matter to him long ago.

The flood of weariness was starting to rise again. He felt as if he could almost see it in thickening waves. It was not within him, it was outside, spreading through the room. For an instant, he felt as if he were alone, lost in a gray desert, needing help and knowing it no help would come.

He stopped short. In the lighted doorway, the length of the room between them, he saw the tall, arrogant figure of a man who had paused for a moment before entering. He had never met the man, but of all the notorious faces that cluttered the pages of newspapers, this was the one he despised. It was Francisco Anconia.

Rearden had never given much thought to men like Bertram Sudder. But with every hour of his life, with the strain and the tide of every moment when his muscles or his mind had ached from effort, with every step he had taken to rise out of the mines of Minnesota and to turn his effort into gold, with all of his profound respect for money and for its meaning he despised the panderer who did not know how to deserve the great gift of inherited wealth. There, he thought, was the most contemptible representative of the species.

He saw Francisco d'Anconia enter, bow to Lillian then walk to the crowd as if he owned the room which he had never entered before. Heads turned to watch him, as if he pulled them a stragg in his wake.

Approaching Lillian once more Rearden said without anger, his contempt becoming amusement in his voice, "I didn't know you knew that one."

"I've met him at a few parties"

"Is he one of your friends, too?"

"Certainly not!" The sharp resentment was genuine

"Then why did you invite him?"

"Well, you can't give a party—not a party that counts—while he's in this country, without inviting him. It's a nuisance if he comes and a social black mark if he doesn't."

Rearden laughed. She was off guard she did not usually admit things of this kind. "Look," he said wearily. "I don't want to spoil your party. But keep that man away from me. Don't come around."

emphatic emphasis of what he understood and did not choose to  
a knowledge She turned away She hoped to avoid him for the  
rest of the evening

Ralph Eubank had joined the group around Dr Pritchett and was saying sullenly, "no you cannot expect people to understand the higher reaches of philosophy Culture should be taken out of the hands of the dollar-chasers We need a national subsidy for literature It is disgraceful that artists are treated like peddlers and that art works have to be sold like soap"

"You mean, your complaint is that they *don't* sell like soap?" asked Francisco d'Anconia.

They had not noticed him approach; the conversation stopped as if slashed off; most of them had never met him, but they all recognized him at once.

"I meant—" Ralph Eubank started angrily and closed his mouth as he saw the eager interest on the faces of his audience, but it was not interest in philosophy any longer.

"Why, hello, Professor!" said Francisco, bowing to Dr. Pritchett. There was no pleasure in Dr. Pritchett's face when he answered the greeting and performed a few introductions.

"We were just discussing a most interesting subject," said the earnest matron. "Dr. Pritchett was telling us that nothing is anything."

"He should, undoubtedly, know more than anyone else about that," Francisco answered gravely.

"I wouldn't have supposed that you knew Dr. Pritchett so well, Señor d'Anconia," she said, and wondered why the professor looked displeased by her remark.

"I am not a philosopher," said Francisco. "I am a realist."

The unattractive young woman gasped. "but you couldn't have, Señor d'Anconia! You're not old enough. I thought of the last century."

"Then why don't we ever hear about him any more?"

"He retired, nine years ago."

"Isn't it odd? When a politician or a movie star retires, we read front page stories about it. But when a philosopher retires, people do not even notice it."

"They do, eventually."

A young man said, astonished, "I thought Hugh Akston was one of those classics that nobody studied any more, except in histories of philosophy. I read an article recently which referred to him as the last of the great advocates of reason."

"Just what did Hugh Akston teach?" asked the earnest matron. Francisco answered, "He taught that everything is something."

"Your loyalty to your teacher is laudable, Señor d'Anconia," said Dr. Pritchett dryly. "May we take it that you are an example of the practical results of his teaching?"

"I am."

James Taggart had approached the group and was waiting to be noticed.

"Hello, Francisco."

"Good evening, James."

"What a wonderful coincidence, seeing you here! I've been very anxious to speak to you."

"That's new. You haven't always been."

"Now you're joking just like in the old days" Taggart was moving  
vly as if casually away from the group hoping to draw Fran  
after him You know that there's not a person in this room  
wouldn't love to talk to you

Really? I'd be inclined to suspect the opposite" Francisco  
followed obediently, but stopped within hearing distance of  
others

I have tried in every possible way to get in touch with you"  
Taggart, "but but circumstances didn't permit me to  
ceed."

Are you trying to hide from me the fact that I refused to  
you?"

Well that is I mean why did you refuse?"

I couldn't imagine what you wanted to speak to me about"

The San Sebastián Mines of course" Taggart's voice rose a  
s

Why, what about them?"

But Now look Francisco this is serious It's a disaster  
unprecedented disaster—and nobody can make any sense out of  
I don't know what to think. I don't understand it at all I have  
right to know"

A right? Aren't you being old fashioned James? But what is it  
I want to know?

Well first of all that nationalization—what are you going to  
about it?

Nothing"

Nothing?"

But surely you don't want me to do anything about it My  
res and your railroad were seized by the will of the people  
you wouldn't want me to oppose the will of the people would  
it?"

"Francisco this is not a laughing matter!"

"I never thought it was"

"Then . . .

ders an  
worth  
sort of

Why

"As we said, "I thought you would approve of it

"Approve?"

"I thought you . . . he  
it  
it

"Yes.

"What are you talking about?"

Francisco shook his head regretfully "I don't know why you  
ould call my behavior rotten I thought you would recognize  
an honest effort to practice what the whole world is preaching  
Doesn't everyone believe that it is evil to be selfish? I was totally  
less in regard to the San Sebastian project Isn't it evil to



pursue a personal interest? I had no personal interest in it whatever. Isn't it evil to work for profit? I did not work for profit—I took no loss. Doesn't everyone agree that the purpose and justification of an industrial enterprise are not production, but the livelihood of its employees? The San Sebastián mines were the most eminent successful venture in industrial history—they produced no copper, but they provided a livelihood for thousands of men who could not have achieved in a lifetime, the equivalent of what they got for one day's work which they could not do. Isn't it generally agreed that an owner is a parasite and an exploiter, that it is the employee who does all the work and makes the product possible? I did not exploit anyone. I did not burden the San Sebastián Mines with my useless presence. I left them in the hands of the men who could. I did not pass judgment on the value of that property. I turned it over to a mining specialist. He was not a very good specialist, but he needed the job very badly. Isn't it generally conceded that when you hire a man for a job, it is his need that counts, not his ability? Doesn't everyone believe that in order to get the goods, all you have to do is need them? I have carried out every moral precept of our age. I expected gratitude and a citation of honor. I do not understand why I am being damned."

In the silence of those who had listened, the sole comment was the shrill sudden giggle of Betty Pope. She had understood nothing, but she saw the look of helpless fury on James Taggart's face.

People were looking at Taggart, expecting an answer. They were indifferent to the issue; they were merely amused by the spectacle of someone's embarrassment. Taggart achieved a patronizing smile.

"You don't expect me to take this seriously?" he asked.

"There was a time," Francisco answered, "when I did not believe that anyone could take it seriously. I was wrong."

"This is outrageous!" Taggart's voice started to rise. "It's perfectly outrageous to treat your public responsibilities with such thoughtless levity!" He turned to hurry away.

Francisco shrugged, spreading his hands. "You see? I didn't think you wanted to speak to me."

Rearden stood alone far at the other end of the room. Philip noticed him, approached and waved to Lillian, calling her over.

"Lillian, I don't think that Henry is having a good time," he said, smiling. One could not tell whether the mockery of his smile was directed at Lillian or at Rearden. "Can't we do something about it?"

"Oh, yes, yes," Lillian said. "I've been very serious. I've wanted to suggest something, but I didn't want to suggest it."

"Oh, I don't know! But he shouldn't be standing around all by himself."

"Drop it," said Rearden. While thinking dimly that he did not want to hurt their feelings, he could not prevent himself from

ling. "You don't know how hard I've tried to be left standing by myself."

There—you see?" Lillian smiled at Philip. "To enjoy life and pleasure is not so simple as pouring a ton of steel. Intellectual pursuits are not learned in the market place."

Philip chuckled. "It's not intellectual pursuits I'm worried about. I'm sure you are about that Puritan stuff, Lillian? If I were you, I wouldn't leave him free to look around. There are too many beautiful women here tonight."

"Philip  
ly, for

you're

ang?"

In the crowd, she realized the contrast for the first time. The faces of the others looked like aggregates of interchangeable features,

light.

Her eyes kept returning to him involuntarily. She never caught him glancing in her direction. She could not believe that he was avoiding her intentionally, there could be no possible reason for it; yet she felt certain that he was. She wanted to approach him and convince herself that she was mistaken. Something stopped her; she could not understand her own reluctance.

Rearden bore patiently a conversation with his mother and two ladies whom she wished him to entertain with stories of his youth and his struggle. He complied, telling himself that she was proud of him in her own way. But he felt as if something in her manner kept suggesting that she had nursed him through his struggle and that she was the source of his success. He was glad when she let him go. Then he escaped once more to the recess of the window.

He stood there for a while, leaning on a sense of privacy as if it were a physical support.

"Mr. Rearden," said a strangely quiet voice beside him. "Permit me to introduce myself. My name is d'Anconia."

Rearden turned, startled, d'Anconia's manner and voice had a quality he had seldom encountered before—a tone of authentic respect.

"How do you do?" he answered. His voice was brusque and dry, but he had answered.

"I have observed that Mrs. Rearden has been trying to avoid the necessity of presenting me to you, and I can guess the reason. Would you prefer that I leave your house?"

The action of naming an issue instead of evading it was so unlike the usual behavior of all the men he knew it was such a sudden, startling relief that Rearden remained silent for a moment, studying Anconia's face. Francisco had said it very simply, neither as a reproach nor a plea but in a manner which, strangely, acknowledged Rearden's dignity and his own.

"No," said Rearden, "whatever else you guessed I did not say that."

"Thank you. In that case you will allow me to speak to you."

"Why should you wish to speak to me?"

"My motives cannot interest you at present."

"Mine are not the sort of conversation that could interest you at all."

"You are mistaken about one of us, Mr. Rearden or both. I came to this party solely in order to meet you."

There had been a faint tone of amusement in Rearden's voice; now it hardened into a hint of contempt. "You started by playing it straight. Stick to it."

"I am."

"What did you want to meet me for? In order to make me lose money?"

Francisco looked straight at him. "Yes—eventually."

"What is it, this time? A gold mine?"

Francisco shook his head slowly; the conscious deliberation of the movement gave it an air that was almost sadness. "No," he said. "I don't want to sell you anything. As a matter of fact I did not attempt to sell the copper mine to James Taggart either. He came to me for it. You won't."

Rearden chuckled. "If you understand that much we have at least a sensible basis for conversation. Proceed on that. If you don't have some fancy investment in mind, what did you want to meet me for?"

"In order to become acquainted with you."

"That's not an answer. It's just another way of saying the same thing."

"Not quite, Mr. Rearden."

"Unless you mean—in order to gain my confidence?"

"No. I don't like people who speak or think in terms of gaining anybody's confidence. If one's actions are honest, one does not need the predated confidence of others; only their rational perception. The person who craves a moral blank check of that kind, has dishonest intentions, whether he admits it to himself or not."

Rearden's startled glance at him was like the involuntary thrust of a hand grasping for support in a desperate need. The glance betrayed how much he wanted to find the sort of man he thought he was seeing. Then Rearden lowered his eyes, almost closing them slowly, shutting out the vision and the need. His face was hard; it had an expression of severity, an inner severity directed at himself. It looked austere and lonely.

"All right," he said tonelessly. "What do you want if it's not my confidence?"



After a moment's silence, Rearden asked, his voice low with a sound which was almost a threat, "What are you trying to do?"

"I am calling your attention to the nature of those for whom you are working."

It would take a man who's never done an honest day's work in his life to think or say that. The contempt in Rearden's voice had a note of relief he had been disarmed by a doubt of his judgment in the character of his adversary, now he felt certain once more. "You wouldn't understand it if I told you that this man who works works for himself, even if he does carry the whole wretched bunch of you along. Now I'll guess what you're thinking: go ahead, say that it's evil, that I'm selfish, conceited, heartless, cruel. I am. I don't want any part of that tripe about working for others. I'm not."

For the first time he saw the look of a personal reaction. "The only"

"Because they're a bunch of miserable children who struggle to remain alive desperately and very badly, while I—I don't even notice the burden."

"Why don't you tell them that?"

"What?"

"That you're working for your own sake, not theirs."

"They know it."

"Oh yes, they know it. Every single one of them here knows. But they don't think you do. And the aim of all their efforts is to keep you from knowing it."

"Why should I care what they think?"

"Because it's a battle in which one must make one's stand clear."

"A battle? What battle? I hold the whip hand. I don't fight."

"Are they? They have a weapon against you. It's their own weapon, but it's a terrible one. Ask yourself what it is, some time."

"Where do you see any evidence of it?"

"In the unforgivable fact that you're as unhappy as you are."

Rearden could accept any form of reproach, abuse, damnation anyone chose to throw at him: the only human reaction which would not accept was pity. The stab of a coldly rebellious man brought him back to the full context of the moment. He spoke fighting not to acknowledge the nature of the emotion rising within him. "What sort of effrontery are you indulging in? What your motive?"

"Let us say—to give you the words you need for the time when"

omj  
don. He felt a dim sense of betrayal, the hint of an unknown

anger "Do you expect me to forget what you are?" he asked, knowing that this was what he had forgotten.

"I do not expect you to think of me at all"

you will accept it. " He heard the words and the strangely solemn inflection of the quiet voice and an inexplicable answer of his own, something within him that wanted to cry yes to accept, to tell this man that he accepted, that he needed it—though there was no name for what he needed, it was not gratitude and he knew that it was not gratitude this man had meant.

Aloud, he said, "I didn't seek to talk to you. But you've asked for it and you're going to hear it. To me there's only one form of human depravity—the man without a purpose."

"That is true."

"I can forgive all those others they're not vicious they're merely helpless. But you—you're the kind who can't be forgiven."

"It is against the sin of forgiveness that I wanted to warn you."

"You had the greatest chance in life. What have you done with it? If you have the mind to understand all the things you said, how can you speak to me at all? How can you face anyone after the sort of irresponsible destruction you've perpetrated in that Mexican madness?"

"It is your right to condemn me for it, if you wish."

Dagny stood by the corner of the window recess listening. They did not notice her. She had seen them together and she had approached, drawn by an impulse she could not explain or resist. It seemed crucially important that she know what these two men said to each other.

She had heard their last few sentences. She had never thought it possible that she would see Francisco taking a beating. He could smash any adversary in any form of encounter. Yet he stood of fering no defense. She knew that it was not indifference she knew his face well enough to see the effort his calm cost him—she saw the faint line of a muscle pulled tight across his cheek.

"Of all those who live by the ability of others," said Rearden "you're the one real parasite."

"I have given you grounds to think so."

"Then what right have you to talk about the meaning of being a man? You're the one who has betrayed it."

"I am sorry if I have offended you by what you may rightly consider as a presumption."

Francisco bowed and turned to go. Rearden said involuntarily, not knowing that the question negated his anger that it was a plea to stop this man and hold him, "What did you want to learn to understand about me?"

Francisco turned. The expression of his face had not changed. It was still a look of gravely courteous respect. "I have answered."

Rearden stood watching him as he walked off into the crowd. The figures of a butler with a crystal dish, and of Dr. Pritchett, stooping to choose another canapé had Francisco from sight. Rearden glanced out at the darkness, nothing could be seen there but the wind.

Dagny stepped forward, when he came out of the recess she smiled openly inviting conversation. He stopped. It seemed to her that he had stopped reluctantly. She spoke hastily to break the silence. "Hank, why do you have so many intellectuals of the loose persuasion here? I wouldn't have them in my house."

This was not what she had wanted to say to him. But she did not know what she wanted to say, never before had she felt herself left wordless in his presence.

She saw his eyes narrowing like a door being closed. "I see no reason why one should not invite them to a party," he answered coldly.

"Oh, I didn't mean to criticize your choice of guests. But well, I've been trying not to learn which one of them is Bertrand Scudder. If I do, I'll slap his face." She tried to sound casual. "I don't want to create a scene, but I'm not sure I'll be able to control myself. I couldn't believe it when somebody told me that Mrs. Rearden had invited him."

"I invited him."

"But—" Then her voice dropped. "Why?"

"I don't attach any importance to occasions of this kind."

"I'm sorry, Hank. I didn't know you were so tolerant. I'm not." He said nothing.

"I know you don't like parties. Neither do I. But sometimes wonder—perhaps, were the only ones who were meant to be able to enjoy them."

"I am afraid I have no talent for it."

"Not for this. But do you think any of these people are enjoying it? They're just straining to be more senseless and aimless than usual. To be light and unimportant. You know, I think that only if one feels immensely important can one feel truly light."

"I wouldn't know."

"It's just a thought that disturbs me once in a while. I thought it about my first ball. I keep thinking that parties are intended to be celebrations, and celebrations should be for those who have something to celebrate."

"I have never thought of it."

She could not adapt her words to the rigid formality of his manner. She could not quite believe it. They had always been easy together in his office. Now he was like a man in a strait jacket.

"Hank, look at it. If you didn't know any of these people, wouldn't it seem beautiful? The lights and the clothes and all that imagination that went to make it possible." She was looking at the room. She did not notice that he had not followed her glance. He was looking down at the shadows on her naked shoulder, soft blue shadows made by the light that fell through the slats.

"her hair "Why have we left it all to fools? It should have been  
rs"

"In what manner?"

"I don't know . I've always expected parties to be exciting  
d brilliant, like some rare drink." She laughed there was a note  
sadness in it. "But I don't drink, either That's just another  
mbol that doesn't mean what it was intended to mean." He was  
ent. She added, "Perhaps there's something that we have missed."  
"I am not aware of it."

In a flash of sudden, desolate emptiness she was glad that he  
d not understood or responded feeling dimly that she had revealed  
o much, yet not knowing what she had revealed She shrugged,  
e movement running through the curve of her shoulder like a  
ant convulsion. "It's just an old illusion of mine," she said in-  
differently "Just a mood that comes once every year or two Let me  
e the latest steel price index and I'll forget all about it."

She did not know that his eyes were following her, as she walked  
way from him.

She moved slowly through the room, looking at no one She  
noticed a small group huddled by the unlighted fireplace The room  
as not cold, but they sat as if they drew comfort from the thought  
f a non-existent fire

"I do not know why, but I am growing to be afraid of the dark.  
o, not now, only when I am alone What frightens me is night,  
light as such."

The speaker was an elderly spinster with an air of breeding and  
sopelness The three women and two men of the group were  
red dressed, the skin of their faces was smoothly well tended, but  
ey had a manner of anxious caution that kept their voices one  
one lower than normal and blurred the differences of their ages,  
ping them all the same gray look of being spent It was the look  
ee saw in groups of respectable people everywhere Dagny stopped  
ad listened.

"But, my dear," one of them asked, "why should it frighten you?"

"I don't know," said the spinster "I am not afraid of prowlers  
n robberies or anything of the sort. But I stay awake all night. I  
all asleep only when I see the sky turning pale It is very odd  
Every evening when it grows dark I get the feeling that this time  
is a final, that daylight will not return"

"My cousin who lives on the coast of Maine wrote me the same  
thing" said one of the women

"Last night," said the spinster "I stayed awake because of the  
shooting There were guns going off all night way out at sea There  
were no flashes There was nothing just those detonations at long  
ervals, somewhere in the fog over the Atlantic"

"I read something about it in the paper this morning Coast Guard  
began practice"

"Why no" the spinster said indifferently "Everybody down on  
the shore knows what it was It was Ragnar Danneskjold. It was  
the Coast Guard trying to catch him."



"Ragnar Danneskjold in Delaware Bay?" a woman gasped.

"Oh yes They say it is not the first time"

"Did they catch him?"

"No"

"Nobody can catch him" said one of the men

"The People's State of Norway has offered a million-dollar reward for his head"

"That's an awful lot of money to pay for a pirate's head"

"But how are we going to have any order or security or planning in the world with a pirate running loose all over the seven seas?"

"Do you know what it was that he seized last night?" said the spinster "The big ship with the relief supplies we were sending to the People's State of France"

"How does he dispose of the goods he seizes?"

"Ah that—nobody knows"

"I met a sailor once from a ship he'd attacked who'd seen him in person. He said that Ragnar Danneskjold has the purest gold hair and the most frightening face on earth a face with no sign of any feeling If there ever was a man born without a heart he's it—the sailor said"

"A nephew of mine saw Ragnar Danneskjold's ship one night, off the coast of Scotland He wrote me that he couldn't believe his eyes It was a better ship than any in the navy of the People's State of England"

"They say he hides in one of those Norwegian fjords where neither God nor man will ever find him That's where the Vikings used to hide in the Middle Ages"

"There's a reward on his head offered by the People's State of Portugal too And by the People's State of Turkey"

"They say it's a national scandal in Norway He comes from one of their best families The family lost its money generations ago but the name is of the noblest The ruins of their castle are still in existence His father is a bishop His father has disowned him and excommunicated him But it had no effect"

"Did you know that Ragnar Danneskjold went to school in the country? Sure The Patrick Henry University"

"Not really?"

"Oh yes You can look it up"

"What bothers me is You know I don't like it I don't like it that he's now appearing right here in our own waters I thought things like that could happen only in the wastelands Only in Europe But a big scale outlaw of that kind operating in Delaware in our day and age"

"He's been seen off Nantucket too And in Bar Harbor The newspapers have been asked not to write about it"

"Why?"

"They don't want people to know that the navy can't cope with him"

"I don't like it. It feels funny It's like something out of the Dark Ages"

Dagny glanced up. She saw Francisco d'Anconia standing a few paces away. He was looking at her with a kind of stressed curiosity, his eyes were mocking.

"It's a strange world we're living in," said the spinster, her voice low.

"I read an article," said one of the women tonelessly. "It said that times of trouble are good for us. It is good that people are growing poorer. To accept privations is a moral virtue."

"I suppose so," said another, without conviction.

"We must not worry. I heard a speech that said it is useless to grieve or to blame anyone. Nobody can help what he does, that is the way things made him. There is nothing we can do about anything. We must learn to bear it."

"What's the use anyway? What is man's fate? Hasn't it always been in hope, but never to achieve? The wise man is the one who does not attempt to hope."

"That is the right attitude to take."

"I don't know. I don't know what is right any more . . . how can we ever know?"

"Oh well, who is John Galt?"

Dagny turned brusquely and started away from them. One of the women followed her.

"But I do know it," said the woman, in the soft, mysterious tone of sharing a secret.

"You know what?"

"I know who is John Galt."

"Who?" Dagny asked tensely, stopping.

"I know a man who knew John Galt in person. This man is an old friend of a great aunt of mine. He was there and he saw it happen. Do you know the legend of Atlantis, Miss Taggart?"

"What?"

"Atlantis."

"Why . . . vaguely?"

"The Isles of the Blessed. That is what the Greeks called it, thousands of years ago. They said Atlantis was a place where heroes lived in a happiness unknown to the rest of the earth. A place which only the spirits of heroes could enter and they reached it without dying because they carried the secret of life within them. Atlantis was lost to mankind, even then. But the Greeks knew that it had existed. They tried to find it. Some of them said it was underground, hidden in the heart of the earth. But most of them said it was an island. A radiant island in the Western Ocean. Perhaps what they were thinking of was America. They never found it. For centuries afterward men said it was only a legend. They did not believe it, but they never stopped looking for it, because they knew that that was what they had to find."

"Well, what about John Galt?"

"He found it."

Dagny's interest was gone. "Who was he?"

"John Galt was a millionaire, a man of inestimable wealth. He was sailing his yacht one night, in mid-Atlantic, fighting the worst

storm ever wreaked upon the world, when he found it. He saw it in the depth, where it had sunk to escape the reach of men. He saw it in the vastness of the universe, where it had sunk to escape the reach of men. He saw it in the vastness of the universe, where it had sunk to escape the reach of men.

was the only one who survived."

"How interesting."

"My friend saw it with his own eyes," said the woman, offended. "It happened many years ago. But John Galt's family pushed up the story."

"And what happened to his fortune? I don't recall ever hearing of a Galt fortune."

"It went down with him." She added belligerently, "You don't have to believe it."

"Miss Taggart doesn't," said Francisco d'Anconia. "I do."

They turned. He had followed them and he stood looking at them with the insolence of exaggerated earnestness.

"Have you ever had faith in anything, Señor d'Anconia?" the woman asked angrily.

"No, madame."

He chuckled at her brusque departure. Dagny asked coldly, "What's the joke?"

"The joke's on that fool woman. She doesn't know that she was telling you the truth."

"Do you expect me to believe that?"

"No."

"Then what do you find so amusing?"

"Oh, a great many things here. Don't you?"

"No."

"Well, that's one of the things I find amusing."

"Francisco, will you leave me alone?"

"But I have. Didn't you notice that you were first to speak to me tonight?"

"Why do you keep watching me?"

"Curiosity."

"About what?"

"You."

"Why?"

"That you are a woman."

She stood defiantly still, because the way he looked at her commanded an angry escape. She stood as she always did, straight and taut, her head lifted impatiently. It was the unfeminine pose of an executive. But her naked shoulder betrayed the fragility of the body under the black dress, and the pose made her most truly a woman. The proud strength became a challenge to someone's superior strength, and the fragility a reminder that the challenge could be broken. She was not conscious of it. She had met no one able to see it.

He said, looking down at her body, "Dagny, what a magnificent waste!"

She had to turn and escape. She felt herself blushing, for the first time in years blushing because she knew suddenly that the sentence named what she had felt all evening

She was a ho had "That's

1

The great burst of sound was the opening chords of Halley's uth Concerto. It rose in tortured triumph speaking its denial pain, its hymn to a distant vision. Then the notes broke. It was if a handful of mud and pebbles had been flung at the music, and what followed was the sound of the rolling and the dripping was Halley's Concerto swung into a popular tune. It was Halley's melody torn apart, its holes stuffed with fuccoughs. The great element of joy had become the giggling of a barroom. Yet it was still the remnant of Halley's melody that gave it form, it was the melody that supported it like a spinal cord.

"Pretty good?" Mort Liddy was smiling at his friends, boastfully and nervously. "Pretty good, eh? Best movie score of the year. Got me a prize. Got me a long term contract. Yeah, this is my score for *Heaven's in Your Backyard*."

Dagny stood, staring at the room, as if one sense could replace another, as if sight could wipe out sound. She moved her head in slow circle trying to find an anchor somewhere. She saw Francisco leaning against a column, his arms crossed, he was looking right at her; he was laughing.

Don't shake like this, she thought. Get out of here. This was the approach of an anger she could not control. She thought. Say nothing. Walk steadily. Get out.

She had started walking cautiously, very slowly. She heard Lillian's words and stopped. Lillian had said it many times this evening in answer to the same question, but it was the first time that Dagny heard it.

"This?" Lillian was saying, extending her arm with the metal bracelet for the inspection of two smartly groomed women. "Why, it's not from a hardware store, it's a very special gift from my husband. Oh, yes, of course it's hideous. But don't you see? It's supposed to be priceless. Of course, I'd exchange it for a common diamond bracelet any time, but somehow nobody will offer me one for it, even though it is so very, very valuable. Why? My dear, it's the first thing ever made of Rearden Metal."

Dagny did not see the room. She did not hear the music. She felt the pressure of dead stillness against her eardrums. She did not know the moment that preceded, or the moments that were to follow. She did not know those involved, neither herself nor Lillian, nor Rearden, nor the meaning of her own action. It was a single instant, blasted out of context. She had heard. She was looking at the bracelet of green-blue metal.

She felt the movement of something being torn off her wrist, and

she heard her own voice saying in the great stillness, very calmly, a voice cold as a skeleton, naked of emotion, "If you are not the coward that I think you are, you will exchange it."

On the palm of her hand, she was extending her diamond bracelet to Lillian.

"You're not serious, Miss Taggart?" said a woman's voice.

It was not Lillian's voice. Lillian's eyes were looking straight at her. She saw them. Lillian knew that she was serious.

"Give me that bracelet," said Dagny, lifting her palm higher, the diamond band glittering across it.

"This is horrible!" cried some woman. It was strange that the cry stood out so sharply. Then Dagny realized that there were people standing around them and that they all stood in silence. She was hearing sounds now, even the music; it was Halley's mangled Concerto, somewhere far away.

She saw Rearden's face. It looked as if something within him

"Thank you, Miss Taggart," she said.

Dagny's fingers closed about the metal. She felt that, she felt nothing else.

Lillian turned, because Rearden had approached her. He took the diamond bracelet from her hand. He clasped it on her wrist, raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

He did not look at Dagny.

Lillian laughed, gaily, easily, attractively, bringing the room back to its normal mood.

"You may have it back, Miss Taggart, when you change your mind," she said.

Dagny had turned away. She felt calm and free. The pressure was gone. The need to get out had vanished.

She clasped the metal bracelet on her wrist. She liked the feel of the weight against her skin. Inexplicably, she felt a touch of feminine vanity, the kind she had never experienced before, the desire to be seen wearing this particular ornament.

From a distance, she heard snatches of indignant voices. "The

He was crossing the room  
somebody  
nobody  
She  
office  
the

to her face, her body was naked but for his metal bracelet. "I'm sorry, Hank," she said, "but I had to do it." Her eyes remained expressionless. Yet she was suddenly certain she knew what he felt. He wanted to slap her face. "It was not necessary," he answered coldly, and walked on.

It was very late when Rearden entered his wife's bedroom. She

He entered at 11:30 and found her asleep. The light shined on a table

There was a  
and no sign of  
haunted. The  
or sleep not

He disturbed.

He still wore his dress clothes, his tie was loose and a strand of hair hung over his face. She glanced at him without astonishment, as if she knew what the last hour in his room had done to him.

He looked at her silently. He had not entered her room for a long time. He stood wishing he had not entered it now.

"Isn't it customary to talk, Henry?"

"If you wish."

"I wish you'd send one of your brilliant experts from the mills to take a look at our furnace. Do you know that it went out during the party and Simons had a terrible time getting it started again? . . . Mrs. Weston says that our best achievement is our work—she loved the hors d'oeuvres. Ralph Eubank said a very funny thing about you, he said you're a crusader with a factory's chimney smoke for a plume. I'm glad you don't care for Francisco d'Anconia. I can't stand him."

He did not care to explain his presence, or to disguise defeat or admit it by leaving. Suddenly, it did not matter to him what he guessed or felt. He walked to the window and stood looking out.

Why had she married him?—he thought. It was a question he had not asked himself on their wedding day eight years ago. Since then, in tortured loneliness, he had asked it many times. He had had no answer.

It was not for position, he thought, or for money. She came from an old family that had both. Her family's name was not among the most distinguished and their fortune was modest but it was sufficient to let her be included in the top circles of New York's society, where he had met her nine years ago. He had appeared in New York like an explosion, in the glare of the success of Rearden Steel—a success that had been thought impossible by the city's experts. It was his indifference that made him

lar He did not know that he was expected to attempt to buy his way into society and that they anticipated the pleasure of rejecting him He had no time to notice their disappointment.

He attended to the invitations invited by men knew, that his people who had that the age of achievement was past

It was Lillian's austerity that attracted him—the conflict between her austerity and her behavior He had never liked anyone or expected to be liked He found himself held by the spectacle of a woman who was obviously pursuing him but with obvious reluctance, as if against her own will, as if fighting a desire she resented. It was she who planned that they should meet, then faced him coldly, as if not caring that he knew it She spoke little, she had an air of mystery that seemed to tell him he would never break through her proud detachment, and an air of amusement, mocking her own desire and his

He had not known many women He had moved toward his goal, sweeping aside everything that did not pertain to it in the world and in himself His dedication to his work was like one of the fires he dealt with, a fire that burned every lesser element, every impurity out of the path

He felt a deep emptiness—because he had sought an act of triumph, though he had not known of what nature, but the response he received was only a woman's acceptance of a casual pleasure and he knew too clearly that what he had won had no meaning He was left, not with a sense of attainment, but with a sense of his own degradation He grew to hate his desire He fought it He came to believe the doctrine that this desire was wholly physical a desire, not of consciousness but of matter, and he rebelled against the thought that his flesh could be free to choose and that its choice was impervious to the will of his mind He had spent his life in mines and mills, shaping matter to his wishes by the power of his brain—and he found it intolerable that he should be unable to control the matter of his own body He fought it He had won his every battle against manmade nature, but this was a battle he lost

It was the difficulty of the conquest that made him want Lillian She seemed to be a woman who expected and deserved a pedestal, this made him want to drag her down to his bed To drag her down, were the words in his mind, they gave him a dark pleasure, the sense of a victory worth winning

He could not understand why—he thought it was an obscene conflict, the sign of some secret depravity within him—why he felt, at the same time, a profound pride at the thought of granting to a woman the title of his wife The feeling was solemn and shining It was almost as if he felt that he wished to honor a woman by the

of possessing her. Lillian seemed to fit the image he had not  
the race,  
that

rk to  
her  
ough his mills. He heard a soft, low, breathless tone—the tone  
admiration—growing in her voice, as she questioned him about  
work and looked at the place around her. He looked at her  
and at the horse of furnace flame and at

saw the same look, but intensified to a degree that seemed to  
make her helpless and silent. It was at dinner, that evening, that  
asked her to marry him.

It took him some time after his marriage before he admitted to  
himself that this was torture. He still remembered the night when  
he admitted it, when he told himself—the veins of his wrists pulled  
tight as he stood by the bed, looking down at Lillian—that he  
deserved the torture and that he would endure it. Lillian was not  
looking at him, she was adjusting her hair. "May I go to sleep  
now?" she asked.

She had never objected, she had never refused him anything;  
he submitted whenever he wished. She submitted in the manner of  
complying with the rule that it was, at times, her duty to become an  
animate object turned over to her husband's use.

She did not censure him. She made it clear that she took it for  
granted that men had degrading instincts which constituted the  
secret, ugly part of marriage. She was condescendingly tolerant.  
She smiled, in amused distaste, at the intensity of what he experi-  
enced. "It's the most undignified pastime I know of," she said to  
him once, "but I have never entertained the illusion that men are  
superior to animals."

His desire for her had died in the first week of their marriage.  
What remained was only a need which he was unable to destroy.  
He had never entered a whorehouse or to the sight of a man that the

up the book and continue her reading.

He told himself that he deserved the torture, because he had  
wished never to touch her again and was unable to maintain his  
decision. He despised himself for that. He despised a need which  
now held no shred of joy or meaning, which had become the mere  
need of a woman's body, an anonymous body that belonged to a  
woman whom he had to forget while he held it. He became con-  
vinced that the need was depravity.



He did not condemn Lillian. He felt a dreary, indifferent respect for her. His hatred of his own desire had made him accept the doctrine that women were pure and that a pure woman was one incapable of physical pleasure.

Through the quiet agony of the years of his marriage, there had been one thought which he would not permit himself to consider: the thought of infidelity. He had given his word. He intended to keep that

... not  
wanted to enter her room. He had fought against it. He had fought, he would  
... ad known  
... ad driven  
... for him.

He stood still, feeling free of desire, feeling the bleak relief of indifference to his body to this room, even to his presence here. He had turned away from her, not to see her lacquered wharftiness. What he thought he should feel was respect; what he felt was revulsion.

"... but Dr. Pritchett said that our culture is dying because our universities have to depend on the alms of the meat packers, the steel puddlers and the purveyors of breakfast cereals."

Why had she married him?—he thought. That bright, crisp voice was not talking at random. She knew why he had come here. She knew what it would do to him to see her pick up a silver buffer and go on talking gaily, polishing her fingernails. She was talking about the party. But she did not mention Bertram Scudder—or Dagny Taggart.

What had she sought in marrying him? He felt the presence of some cold, driving purpose within her—but found nothing to condemn. She had never tried to use him. She made no demands on

... but she wanted nothing material from him.

He turned and looked at her wearily.  
"Next time you give a party," he said, "stick to your own crowd. Don't invite what you think are my friends. I don't care to meet them socially."

She laughed, startled and pleased. "I don't blame you, darling," she said.

He walked out, adding nothing else.  
What did she want from him?—he thought. What was she after? In the universe as he knew it, there was no answer.

rails rose through the rocks to the oil derricks and the oil ricks rose to the sky Dagny stood on the bridge, looking up the crest of the hill where the sun hit a spot of metal on the top the highest rigging It looked like a white torch lighted over the w on the ridges of Wyatt Oil

By spring, she thought, the track would meet the line growing ward from Cheyenne She let her eyes follow the green-blue ls that started from the derricks, came down, went across the dge and past her She turned her head to follow them through : miles of clear air, as they went on in great curves hung on the les of the mountains, far to the end of the new track, where a omotive crane, like an arm of naked bones and nerves, moved wely against the sky.

A tractor went past her, loaded with green blue bolts The sound drills came as a steady shudder from far below, where men rung on metal cables, cutting the straight stone drop of the canyon all to reinforce the abutments of the bridge Down the track, she ould see men working, their arms stiff with the tension of their uscles as they gripped the handles of electric tie tampers

"Muscles, Miss Taggart," Ben Nealy, the contractor, had said to r, "muscles—that's all it takes to build anything in the world"

No contractor equal to McNamara seemed to exist anywhere he had taken the best she could find No engineer on the Taggart aff could be trusted to supervise the job all of them were skepti- al about the new metal "Frankly, Miss Taggart," her chief en- ineer had said, "since it is an experiment that nobody has ever empted before, I do not think it's fair that it should be my sponsibility" "It's mine," she had answered He was a man in e forties who still preserved the breezy manner of the college um which he had graduated Once, Taggart Transcontinental had ad a chief engineer, a silent, gray haired self-educated man who ould not be matched on any railroad He had resigned, five years ago.

She glanced down over the bridge She was standing on a slender am of steel above a gorge that had cracked the mountains to e depth of fifteen hundred feet Far at the bottom she could ds- nguish the dim outlines of a dry river bed, of piled boulders of ees contorted by centuries She wondered whether boulders tree runks' muscles could ever bridge that canyon She wondered d herself thinking suddenly that cave-dwellers had n the bottom of that canyon for ages

up at the Wyatt oil fields The track broke into sidings e. She saw the small disks of switches dot ed against ere metal switches of the kind that were scattered onoticed throughout the country—but these were s were greenish-blue What they ur of speaking quietly eveny less target that was the person Amalgamated Switch and Signal

Company, Inc. of Connecticut. "But, Miss Taggart, my dear Ma Taggart! My company has served your company for generations, why, your grandfather was the first customer of my grandfather, so you cannot doubt our eagerness to do anything you ask, but—did you say switches made of Rearden Metal?"

"Yes"

"But, Miss Taggart! Consider what it would mean, having to work with that metal. Do you know that the stuff won't melt under less than four thousand degrees? . . . Great? Well, maybe that's great for motor manufacturers, but what I'm thinking of is that it means a new type of furnace, a new process entirely, men to be trained, schedules upset, work rules shot, everything balled up and then God only knows whether it will come out right or not! . . . How do you know, Miss Taggart? How can you know, when it's never been done before? . . . Well, I can't say that that metal is

whether  
a great  
Well, no  
use wh

am I to take a chance on a job of this kind?"

She had doubled the price of her order. Rearden had sent two metallurgists to train Mowen's men, to teach, to show, to explain every step of the process, and had paid the salaries of Mowen's men while they were being trained.

She looked at the metal . . .

she had obtained a paper that was an emergency permit of a legal kind, no one would ever be able to untangle, she had had the padlocked doors of the Summit Casting plant unlocked and a random, half-dressed crew . . . turned gray with dis-  
Taggart en-  
Rio Norte Li

She listened to the sound of the drills. The work had been held up once, when the drilling for the bridge abutments was stopped. "I couldn't help it, Miss Taggart," Ben Nealy had said, offended. "You know how fast drill heads wear out. I had them on order, but Incorporated Tool ran into a little trouble, they couldn't help it either. Associated Steel was delayed in delivering the steel to them, so there's nothing we can do but wait. It's no use getting upset, Miss Taggart. I'm doing my best."

"I've hired you to do a job, not to do your best—whatever that is."

"That's a funny thing to say. That's an unpopular attitude, Miss Taggart, mighty unpopular."

"Forget Incorporated Tool. Forget the steel. Order the drill heads made of Rearden Metal."

"Not me I've had enough trouble with the damn stuff in that  
ail of yours. I'm not going to mess up my own equipment."  
"A drill head of Rearden Metal will outlast three of steel."  
"Maybe."  
"I said order them made."  
"Who's going to pay for it?"  
"I am."  
"Who's going to find somebody to make them?"  
She had telephoned Rearden. He had found an abandoned tool

ing. She had thought of a new bridge of Rearden Metal. She had  
asked her chief engineer to submit a design and an estimate of the

not know what you mean when you say that I haven't made use  
of the metal. This design is an adaptation of the best bridges on  
cord. What else did you expect?"

"A new method of construction."  
"What do you mean a new method?"  
"I mean that when men got structural steel they did not use it  
to build steel copies of wooden bridges. She had added wearily  
Get me an estimate on what we'll need to make our old bridge  
out for another five years."

"Yes, Miss Taggart," he had said cheerfully. "If we reinforce it  
with steel—"

"We'll reinforce it with Rearden Metal."  
"Yes, Miss Taggart," he had said coldly.

She looked at the snow-covered mountains. Her job had seemed  
hard at times in New York. She had stopped for blank moments  
in the middle of her office, paralyzed by despair at the rigidity of  
one which she could not stretch any further—on a day when urgent  
appointments had succeeded one another when she had discussed  
rotten Diesels, rotting freight cars, failing signal systems, falling  
avenues, while thinking of the latest emergency on the Rio Norte  
construction when she had talked with the vision of two streaks  
of green-blue metal cutting across her mind when she had inter-  
rupted the discussions, realizing suddenly why a certain news item  
had disturbed her, and seized the telephone receiver to call long  
distance to call her contractor to say "Where do you get the food  
from, for your men? I thought so. Well, Barton and Jones  
of Denver went bankrupt yesterday. Better find another supplier at

once if you don't want to have a famine on your hands " She had been building the line from her desk in New York. It had seemed hard. But now she was looking at the track. It was growing. It would be done on time.

She heard sharp hurried footsteps and turned. A man was coming up the track. He was tall and young, his head of black hair was hatless in the cold wind. He wore a workman's leather jacket, but he did not look like a workman, there was too imperious an assurance in the way he walked. She could not recognize the face until he came closer. It was Ellis Wyatt. She had not seen him since that one interview in her office.

He approached, stopped, looked at her and smiled.

"Hello, Dagny," he said.

In a single shock of emotion, she knew everything the two words were intended to tell her. It was forgiveness, understanding, acknowledgment. It was a salute.

She laughed, like a child, in happiness that things should be as right as that.

"Hello," she said, extending her hand.

His hand held hers an instant longer than a greeting required. It was their signature under a score settled and understood.

"Tell Nealy to put up new snow fences for a mile and a half on Granada Pass," he said. "The old ones are rotted. They won't stand through another storm. Send him a rotary plow. What he's got is a piece of junk that wouldn't sweep a back yard. The big snows are coming any day now."

She considered him for a moment. "How often have you been doing this?" she asked.

"What?"

"Coming to watch the work."

"Every now and then. When I have time. Why?"

"Were you here the night when they had the rock slide?"

"Yes."

"I was surprised how quickly and well they cleared the track, when I got the reports about it. It made me think that Nealy was a better man than I had thought."

"He isn't."

"Was it you who organized the system of moving his day's supplies down to the line?"

"Sure. His men used to spend half their time hunting for things. Tell him to watch his water tanks. They'll freeze on him one of these nights. See if you can get him a new ditcher. I don't like the looks of the one he's got. Check on his wiring system."

She looked at him for a moment. "Thanks, Ellis," she said.

He . . . . .

the b . . . . .

"H. . . . .

Sh . . . . .

was pointing at Ellis Wyatt.

"What place?"

The railroad, Miss Taggart. Your railroad, Or the whole world  
be That's what he thinks "

Nealy was a bulky man with a soft, sullen face His eyes  
stubborn and blank. In the bluish light of the snow, his skin  
the tinge of butter.

What does he keep hanging around here for?" he said, "As if  
ody knew their business but him. The snooty show-off. Who does  
think he is?"

God damn you," said Dagny evenly, not raising her voice.

Nealy could never know what had made her say it. But some  
t of him, in some way of his own, knew it the shocking thing  
her was that he was not shocked He said nothing

"Let's go to your quarters," she said wearily, pointing to an old  
way coach on a spur in the distance. "Have somebody there to  
a notes "

"Now about those cross-ties, Miss Taggart," he said hastily as they  
rtd. "Mr. Coleman of your office okayed them He didn't say  
ything about too much bark. I don't see why you think they're—" "I  
said you're going to replace them "

When she came out of the coach, exhausted by two hours of  
ort to be patient, to instruct, to explain—she saw an automobile  
rked on the torn dirt road below, a black two-seater, sparkling  
d new A new car was an astonishing sight anywhere, one did  
t see them often.

She glanced around and gasped at the sight of the tall figure  
indim at the foot of the bridge It was Hank Rearden, she had  
t expected to find him in Colorado. He seemed absorbed in  
calculations, pencil and notebook in hand His clothes attracted  
attention, like his car and for the same reason, he wore a simple  
rockcoat and a hat with a slanting brim, but they were of such  
od quality, so flagrantly expensive that they appeared ostentatious  
mong the seedy garments of the crowds everywhere, the more  
tentatious because worn so naturally

She noticed suddenly that she was running toward him, she had  
t all trace of exhaustion Then she remembered that she had not  
en him since the party. She stopped.

He saw her, he waved to her in a gesture of pleased astonished  
resting, and he walked forward to meet her He was smiling.

"Hello," he said "Your first trip to the job?"

"My fifth, in three months "

"I don't know you were here Nobody told me "

"I thought you'd break down some day "

"Break down?"

"Enough ■ come and see this There's your Metal How do you  
be it?"

He glanced around "If you ever decide to quit the railroad busi-  
ness, let me know."

"You'd give me a job?"

"Any time "

She looked at him for a moment. "You're only half-kidding.  
Hank, I think you'd like it—having me ask you for a job. Having

me for an employee instead of a customer. Giving me orders & obey."

"Yes I would"

She said, her face hard, "Don't quit the steel business I won't promise you a job on the railroad"

He laughed "Don't try it."

"What?"

"To win any battle when I set the terms"

She did not answer She was struck by what the words made her feel, it was not an emotion, but a physical sensation of pleasure which she could not name or understand

'Incidentally,' he said, "this is not my first trip. I was here yesterday"

"You were? Why?"

'Oh, I came to Colorado on some business of my own, so I thought I'd take a look at this"

"What are you after?"

"Why do you assume that I'm after anything?"

"You wouldn't waste time coming here just to look. Not twice"

He laughed "True" He pointed at the bridge "I'm after that."

"What about it?"

"It's ready for the scrap heap"

"Do you suppose that I don't know it?"

"I saw the specifications of your order for Rearden Metal members for that bridge You're wasting your money The difference between what you're planning to spend on a makeshift that will last a couple of years and the cost of a new Rearden Metal bridge, comparatively so little that I don't see why you want to bother preserving this museum piece"

"I've thought of a new Rearden Metal bridge I've had my engineers give me an estimate"

"What did they tell you?"

"Two million dollars"

"Good God!"

"What would you say?"

"Eight hundred thousand"

She looked at him She knew that he never spoke idly. She was trying to sound calm, "How?"

"Like this"

He showed her his notebook. She saw the disjointed notations he had made, a great many figures, a few rough sketches She understood his scheme before he had finished explaining it. She did not notice that they had sat down, that they were sitting on a pile of frozen lumber, that her legs were pressed to the rough planks she could feel the cold through her thin stockings They were together over a few scraps of paper which could make it possible for thousands of people to be saved

voice sounded

loads, wind pre

foot truss span

been made before and could not be made except with members

the strength and the lightness of Rearden Metal  
[ank," she asked, "did you invent this in two days?"  
"Well, no. I 'invented' it long before I had Rearden Metal. I  
ed it out while making steel for bridges. I wanted a metal with  
one who would be able to do this, among other things. I came  
just to see your particular problem for myself."  
He chuckled, when he saw the slow movement of her hand across  
eyes and the line of bitterness in the set of her mouth, as if she  
trying to wipe out the things against which she had fought  
an exhausting, cheerless battle.  
"This is only a rough scheme," he said, "but I believe you see  
it can be done?"

"I can tell you all that I see, Hank."

"Don't bother. I know it."

"You're saving Taggart Transcontinental for the second time."

"You used to be a better psychologist than that."

"What do you mean?"

"Why should I give a damn about saving Taggart Transcontinen-

"Don't you know that I want to have a bridge of Rearden  
Metal to show the country?"

"Yes, Hank. I know it."

"There are too many people yelping that rails of Rearden Metal  
are unsafe. So I thought I'd make them yelp about."

" . . . "

light.

"Hank, I don't know anyone, not anyone in the world who'd  
think of such an answer to people, in such circumstances—except  
me."

"What about you? Would you want to make the answer with  
me and face the same screaming?"

"You knew I would."

"Yes. I knew it."

He glanced at her, his eyes narrowed, he did not laugh as she  
said, but the glance was an equivalent.

He remembered suddenly their last meeting at the party. The  
memory seemed incredible. Their ease with each other—the strange,  
un-headed feeling, which included the knowledge that it was  
the only sense of ease either of them found anywhere—made the  
thought of hostility impossible. Yet she knew that the party had  
been in place, he acted as if it had not.

They walked to the edge of the canyon. Together, they looked  
down the dark drop, at the rise of rock beyond it, at the sun high on  
the derricks of Wyatt Oil. She stood, her feet apart on the frozen  
ground, braced firmly against the wind. She could feel without  
looking at it, the line of his chest behind her shoulder. The wind  
beat at her coat against his legs.

"Hank, do you think we can build it in time? There are only six  
months left."

"Sure. It will take less time and labor than any other type of  
bridge. Let me have my engineers work out the basic scheme and



submit it to you. No obligation on your part. Just take a look at it and see for yourself whether you'll be able to afford it. You will. Then you can let your college boys work out the details."

"What about the Metal?"

"I'll get the Metal rolled if I have to throw every other order out of the mills."

"You'll get it rolled on so short a notice?"

"Have I ever held you up on an order?"

"No. But the way things are going nowadays, you might not be able to help it."

"Who do you think you're talking to—Orren Boyle?"

She laughed. "All right. Let me have the drawings as soon as possible. I'll take a look and let you know within forty-eight hours. As to my college boys, they— She stopped frowning. "Hank, why is it so hard to find good men for any job nowadays?"

"I don't know."

He looked at the lines of the mountains cut across the sky. A thin jet of smoke was rising from a distant valley.

"Have you seen the new towns of Colorado and the factories?" he asked.

"Yes."

"It's great, isn't it?—to see the kind of men they've gathered there—them young fellows all over the mountains."

"What are you doing in Colorado?"

He smiled. "Looking at a mining property."

"What sort?"

"Copper."

"Good God, don't you have enough to do?"

"I know it's a complicated job. But the supply of copper is becoming completely unreliable. There doesn't seem to be a single first-rate company left in the business in this country—and I don't want to do it myself."

"I"

"S"

my chance is being made up by all those failures and shortages. I need a great deal of copper for Rearden Metal."

"Have you bought the mine?"

"Not yet. There are a few problems to solve. Getting the mine the equipment, the transportation."

"Oh, yes?" She chuckled. "Going to speak to me about building a branch line?"

"Might. There's no limit to what's possible in this state. Do you know that they have every kind of natural resource here waiting untouched? And the way their factories are growing! I feel ten years younger when I come here."

"I don't." She was looking east, past the mountains. "I think of the contrast, all over the rest of the Taggart system. There's the

carry less tonnage produced each year. It's as if . . . Hank, it's wrong with the country?

"I don't know."

"I keep thinking of what they told us in school about the sun's energy growing colder each year. I remember wondering then, what it would be like in the last days of the world. I think it would be . . . like this. Growing colder and things stopping."

"I never believed that story. I thought by the time the sun washausted, men would find a substitute."

"You did? Funny. I thought that too."

He pointed at the column of smoke. "There's your new sunrise going to feed the rest."

"If it's not stopped?"

"Do you think it can be stopped?"

She looked at the rail under her feet. "No," she said.

He smiled. He looked down at the rail, then let his eyes move along the track, up the sides of the mountains to the distant crane. He saw two things as if for a moment the two stood alone in her field of vision: the lines of his profile and the green-blue cord curling through space.

"We've done it, haven't we?" he said.

In payment for every effort, for every sleepless night, for every bent thrust against despair, this moment was all she wanted. "Yes. We have."

She looked away, noticed an old crane on a siding and thought that its cables were worn and would need replacing. This was the

the reward of having  
ment she thought and  
sing it together—what  
she was free for the

upset, most commonplace concerns of the moment, because nothing could be meaningless within her sight.

She wondered what made her certain that he felt as she did. He turned abruptly and started toward his car. She followed. They did not look at each other.

"I'm due to leave for the East in an hour," he said.

She pointed at the car. "Where did you get that?"

"Here. It's a Hammond. Hammond of Colorado—they're the only people who're still making a good car. I just bought it on this

op."

"Wonderful job."

"Yes, isn't it?"

"Going to drive it back to New York?"

"No. I'm having it shipped. I flew my plane down here."

"Oh, you did? I drove down from Cheyenne—I had to see the engine—but I'm anxious to get home as fast as possible. Would you take me along? Can I fly back with you?"

He did not answer at once. She noticed the empty moment of a false "I'm sorry," he said, she wondered whether she imagined the ease of abruptness in his voice. "I'm not flying back to New York. I'm going to Minnesota."

'Oh well, then I'll try to get on an air liner, if I can find one today'

She watched his car vanish down the winding road. She drove to the airport an hour later. The place was a small field at the bottom of a break in the desolate chain of mountains. There were patches of snow on the hard, pitted earth. The pole of a beacon stood at one side trailing wires to the ground, the other poles had been knocked down by a storm.

A lonely attendant came to meet her. "No, Miss Taggart," he said regretfully, "no planes till day after tomorrow. There's only one transcontinental liner every two days, you know, and the one that was due today has been grounded, down in Arizona. Engine trouble as usual. He added, 'It's a pity you didn't get here a bit sooner. Mr. Rearden took off for New York, in his private plane just a little while ago.'"

"He wasn't flying to New York, was he?"

"Why, yes. He said so."

"Are you sure?"

"He said he had an appointment there tonight."

She looked at the sky to the east, blankly, without moving. She had no clue to any reason, nothing to give her a foothold, nothing with which to weigh this or fight it or understand.

\* \*

"Damn these streets!" said James Taggart. "We're going to be late."

Dagny glanced ahead past the back of the chauffeur. Through the circle made by a windshield wiper on the steel streaked glass, she saw black worn glistening car tops strung in a motionless line. Far ahead the smear of a red lantern, low over the ground, marked a street excavation.

"There's something wrong on every other street," said Taggart irritably. "Why doesn't somebody fix them?"

She leaned back against the seat, tightening the collar of her wrap. She felt exhausted at the end of a day she had started at her desk, in her office at seven A.M., a day she had broken off, uncompleted to rush home and dress because she had promised Jim to speak at the dinner of the New York Business Council. "They want us to give them a talk about Rearden Metal," he had said. "You can do it so much better than I. It's very important that we present a good case. There's such a controversy about Rearden Metal."

Sitting beside him in his car she regretted that she had agreed. She looked at the streets of New York and thought of the race between metal and time between the rails of the Rio Norte Line and the passing days. She felt as if her nerves were being pulled tight by the stillness of the car by the guilt of wasting an evening when she could not afford to waste an hour.

"With all those attacks on Rearden that one hears everywhere," said Taggart, "he might need a few friends."

She glanced at him incredulously. "You mean you want to start by him?"

He did not answer at once, he asked, his voice bleak, "The

rt of the special committee of the National Council of Metal  
stries—what do you think of it?"

You know what I think of it."

They said Rearden Metal is a threat to public safety. They said  
chemical composition is unsound, it's brittle, it's decomposing  
ecularly, and it will crack suddenly, without warning. "He

ped, as if begging for an answer. She did not answer. He asked  
iously, "You haven't changed your mind about it, have you?"

About what?"

About that metal."

No, Jim, I have not changed my mind."

They're experts, though. . . the men on that committee. . .

experts. Chief metallurgists for the biggest corporations,

a string of degrees from universities all over the country.

"He said it unhappily, as if he were begging her to make him  
bt these men and their verdict.

He watched him puzzled; this was not like him.

The car jerked forward. It moved slowly through a gap in a

nk barrier, past the hole of a broken water main. She saw the

pipe stacked by the excavation, the pipe bore a trademark.

Aggart did not turn to her, but his jaw snapped open. "If that

slob thinks he can—" he started but stopped and did not finish.

She looked up at a street lamp on the corner. It was a globe of

ss filled with light. It hung, secure from storm lighting, boarded

adows and cracked sidewalks as their only guardian. At the end

the street, across the river, against the glow of a factory, she

the thin tracing of a power station. A truck went by, hiding

r view. It was the kind of truck that fed the power station—a

lk truck, its bright new paint impervious to sleet, green with

ute letters: Wyatt Oil, Colorado.

"Dagny, have you heard about that discussion at the structural

el workers' union meeting in Detroit?"

"No, sir."

issued his order, but fast!

ades against it?"

"Let them."

A dot of light was rising in a straight line to the top of an invisible

wer. It was the elevator of a great hotel. The car went past the

along's alley. Men were moving a heavy crated piece of equip-

ment from a truck into the basement. She saw the name on the

re: Nielsen Motors, Colorado.

hether their mem-

ork with Rearden

as enough for the

Rearden Metal. He

what if everybody

What if

"I don't like that resolution passed by the convention of the grade school teachers of New Mexico," said Taggart.

"What resolution?"

"They resolved that it was their opinion that children should not be permitted to ride on the new Rio Norte Line of Taggart Transcontinental when it's completed, because it is unsafe . . . They said it specifically, the new line of Taggart Transcontinental. It was in all the newspapers. It's terrible publicity for us. . . . Dagny, what do you think we should do to answer them?"

"Run the first train on the new Rio Norte Line."

He remained silent for a long time. He looked strangely dejected. She could not understand it. He did not gloat, he did not use the opinions of his favorite authorities against her, he seemed to be pleading for reassurance.

A car flashed past them, she had a moment's glimpse of power—the make

built . . .

on time.

It was strange to hear a note of plain emotion in his voice, the uncomplicated sound of animal fear.

"God help this city, if we don't!" she answered.

The car turned a corner. Above the black roofs of the city, she saw the page of the calendar, but by the white glare of a spotlight it said January 29.

"Dan Conway is a bastard!"

The words broke out suddenly, as if he could not hold them any longer.

She looked at him, bewildered. "Why?"

"He refused to sell us the Colorado track of the Phoenix Durango."

"You didn't—!" She had to stop. She started again, keeping her voice flat in order not to scream. "You haven't approached him about it?"

"Of course I have!"

"You didn't expect him . . . to sell it . . . to you?"

"Why not? His hysterically belligerent manner was back—!" offered him more than anybody else did. We wouldn't have had the expense of . . . sed i

a . . . this  
w . . . sublu  
o . . . will

But the son of a bitch refused. He's actually declared that not a foot of rail would be sold to Taggart Transcontinental. He's selling it piecemeal to any stray corner, to one horse railroads in Arkansas or North Dakota, selling it at a loss, way under what I offered him the bastard! Doesn't even want to take a profit! And you should see those vultures flocking to him! They know they'd never have a chance to get rail anywhere else!"

She sat her head bowed. He could not bear to look at him.

"I think it's contrary to the intent of the Anti dog-eat-dog Rule,"

said angrily "I think it was the intent and purpose of the National Alliance of Railroads to protect the essential systems, not the jerksters of North Dakota. But I can't get the Alliance to vote on it now, because they're all down there, outbidding one another for rat rail!"

She said slowly as if she wished it were possible to wear gloves and handle the words, "I see why you want me to defend Rearden Metal."

"I don't know what you're—"

"Shut up, Jim," she said quietly.

He remained silent for a moment. Then he drew his head back and drawled defiantly, "You'd better do a good job of defending Rearden Metal because Bertram Scudder can get pretty sarcastic."

"Bertram Scudder?"

"He's going to be one of the speakers tonight."

"One of the . . . You didn't tell me there were to be other speakers."

"Well . . . I . . . What difference does that make? You're not afraid of him, are you?"

"The New York Business Council . . . and you invite Bertram Scudder?"

"Why not? Don't you think it's smart? He doesn't have any hard feelings toward businessmen, not really. He's accepted the invitation. We want to be broadminded and hear all sides and maybe win him over. Well, what are you staring at? You'll be able to beat him, won't you?"

" . . . to beat him?"

"On the air. It's going to be a radio broadcast. You're going in debate with him the question 'Is Rearden Metal a lethal product of greed?'"

She leaned forward. She pulled open the glass partition of the front seat, ordering, "Stop the car!"

She did not hear what Taggart was saying. She noticed dimly that his voice rose to screams. "They're waiting! Five hundred people at the dinner, and a national hook up! You can't do this to me!" He seized her arm screaming. But why?"

"You goddamn fool, do you think I consider their question debatable?"

The car stopped, she leaped out and ran.

The first thing she noticed after a while, was her slippers. She was walking slowly, normally, and it was strange to feel iced stone under the thin soles of black satin sandals. She pushed her hair back, off her forehead, and felt drops of sleet melting on her palm.

She was quiet now, the blinding anger was gone. She felt nothing but a gray weariness. Her head ached a little. She realized that she was hungry and remembered that she was to have had dinner at the Business Council. She walked on. She did not want to eat. She thought she would get a cup of coffee somewhere then take a cab home.

She glanced around her. There were no cabs in sight. She did not know the neighborhood. It did not seem to be a good one.

an empty stretch of space across the street, an abandoned park encircled by a jagged line that began as distant skyscrapers and came down to factory chimneys, she saw a few lights in the windows of dilapidated houses, a few small, grimy shops closed for the night, and the fog of the East River two blocks away.

She started back toward the center of the city. The black shadow of a ruin rose before her. It had been an office building, long ago she saw the sky through the naked steel skeleton and the angular remnants of the bricks that had crumbled. In the shadow of the ruin like a blade of grass fighting to live at the roots of a dead giant, there stood a small diner. Its windows were a bright bar of glass and light. She went in.

There was a clean counter inside, with a shining strip of chromium at the edges. There was a bright metal boiler and the odor of coffee. A few derelicts sat at the counter, a husky, elderly man stood behind it, the sleeves of his clean white shirt rolled at the elbows. The warm air made her realize, in simple gratitude, that she had been cold. She pulled her black velvet cape tight about her and sat down at the counter.

"A cup of coffee please," she said.

The men looked at her without curiosity. They did not seem astonished to see a woman in evening clothes enter a slum diner. Nothing astonished anyone these days. The owner turned impassively to fill her order; there was in his stolid indifference, the kind of mercifulness that asks no questions.

She could not tell whether the four at the counter were beggars or working men. Neither clothes nor manner showed the difference, these days. The owner placed a mug of coffee before her. She closed both hands about it, finding enjoyment in its warmth.

She glanced around her and thought, in habitual professional calculation, how wonderful it was that one could buy so much for a dime. Her eyes moved from the stainless steel cylinder of the coffee boiler to the cast iron griddle, to the glass shelves, to the enameled sink, to the chromium blades of a mixer. The owner was making toast. She found pleasure in watching the ingenuity of an open belt that moved slowly, carrying slices of bread past glowing electric coils. Then she saw the name stamped on the toaster: *Marshall Colorado*.

Her head fell down on her arm on the counter.

"It's no use, lady," said the old bum beside her.

She had to raise her head. She had a smile in amusement, at him and at herself.

"It isn't?" she asked.

"No. Forget it. You're only fooling yourself."

"About what?"

"About anything being worth a damn. It's dust, lady, all of dust and blood. Don't believe the dreams they pump you full of, and you won't get hurt."

"What dreams?"

"The stories they tell you when you're young—about the human spirit. There isn't any human spirit. Man is just a low grade animal."

out intellect, without soul, without virtues or moral values. An animal with only two capacities—to eat and to reproduce.” His gaunt face, with staring eyes and shrunken features that had delicately still retained a trace of distinction. He looked like the bulk of an evangelist or a professor of esthetics who had spent his life in contemplation in obscure museums. She wondered what destroyed him, what error on the way could bring a man to

“You go through life looking for beauty, for greatness, for some little achievement,” he said. “And what do you find? A lot of clock machinery for making upholstered cars or inner-spring mattresses.”

“What’s wrong with inner-spring mattresses?” said a man who looked like a truck driver. “Don’t mind him, lady. He likes to hear himself talk. He don’t mean no harm.”

“Man’s only talent is an ignoble cunning for satisfying the needs of his body,” said the old bum. “No intelligence is required for that. Don’t believe the stories about man’s mind, his spirit, his ideals, his use of unlimited ambition.”

“I don’t,” said a young boy who sat at the end of the counter. He wore a coat ripped across one shoulder. His square-shaped mouth seemed formed by the bitterness of a lifetime.

“Spirit?” said the old bum. “There’s no spirit involved in manufacturing or in sex. Yet these are man’s only concerns. Matter—these are all men know or care about. As witness our great industries—their only accomplishment of our alleged civilization—built by vulgar materialists with the aims, the interests and the moral sense of hogs. It doesn’t take any morality to turn out a ten-ton truck on an assembly line.”

“What is morality?” she asked.

“Judgment to distinguish right and wrong, vision to see the truth, courage to act upon it, dedication to that which is good, integrity to stand by the good at any price. But where does one find it?”

The young boy made a sound that was half-chuckle, half-sneer.

“What?”

“Now over his eyes.” “I know.”

Nobody heard him or paid any attention. The young boy was watching Dagny with a kind of fierce, purposeless intensity.

“You’re not afraid,” he said to her suddenly without explanation. That statement in a brusque, lifeless voice that had a note of won-

der. She looked at him. “No,” she said. “I’m not.”

“I know who is John Galt,” said the tramp. “It’s a secret, but I know it.”

“Who?” she asked without interest.

“An explorer,” said the tramp. “The greatest explorer that ever lived. The man who found the fountain of youth.”



"Give me another cup Black," said the old bum, pushing his cup across the counter

John Galt spent years looking for it. He crossed oceans and crossed deserts and he went down into forgotten mines, miles under the earth. But he found it on the top of a mountain. It took him ten years to climb that mountain. It broke every bone in his body. It tore the skin off his hands. It made him lose his home, his name, his love. But he climbed it. He found the fountain of youth, which he wanted to bring down to men. Only he never came back."

"Why didn't he?" she asked.

"Because he found that it couldn't be brought down."

The man who sat in front of Rearden's desk had vague features and a manner devoid of all emphasis, so that one could form no specific image of his face nor detect the driving motive of his mission. His only mark of distinction seemed to be a bulbous nose, but too large for the rest of him. His manner was meek, but it conveyed a preposterous hint, the hint of a threat deliberately kept furtive yet intended to be recognized. Rearden could not understand the purpose of his visit. He was Dr. Potter, who held some undefined position with the State Science Institute.

"What do you want?" Rearden asked for the third time.

"It is the social aspect that I am asking you to consider, Mr. Rearden," the man said softly. "I urge you to take note of the fact that we are living in. Our economy is not ready for it."

"For what?"

"Our economy is in a state of extremely precarious equilibrium. We all have to pool our efforts to save it from collapse."

"Well, what is it you want me to do?"

"These are the considerations which I was asked to call to your attention. I am from the State Science Institute, Mr. Rearden."

"You've said so before. But what did you wish to see me about?"

"The State Science Institute does not hold a favorable opinion of Rearden Metal."

"You've said that too."

"Isn't that a factor which you must take into consideration?"

"No."

The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office. The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office.

The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office. The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office.

The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office. The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office.

country, Mr. Rearden."

"So I'm told."

"Surely you do not want to put your own judgment against theirs?"

"I do."

The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office. The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office.

The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office. The light was growing dim in the broad windows of the office.

"It's only a question of time Mr Rearden" the man said placatingly "Just a temporary delay Just to give our economy a chance to get stabilized If you'd only wait for a couple of years—"

Rearden chuckled gaily contemptuously "So that's what you're after? Want me to take Rearden Metal off the market? Why?"

"Only for a few years Mr Rearden Only until—"

"Look," said Rearden "Now I'll ask you a question did your scientists decide that Rearden Metal is not what I claim it is?"

"We have not committed ourselves as to that."

"Did they decide it's no good?"

"Is Rearden Metal good or not?"

"If we view the picture from the angle of the alarming growth of employment, which at present—"

"Is Rearden Metal good?"

"At a time of desperate steel shortage we cannot afford to permit the expansion of a steel company which produces too much because it might throw out of business the companies which produce a little, thus creating an unbalanced economy which—"

"Are you going to answer my question?"

The man shrugged "Questions of value are relative If Rearden Metal is not good it's a physical danger to the public If it is good—it's a social danger"

"If you have anything to say to me about the physical danger of Rearden Metal say it. Drop the rest of it. Fast I don't speak that language"

"But surely questions of social welfare—"

"Drop it."

The man looked bewildered and lost as if the ground had been pulled from under his feet In a moment, he asked helplessly "But what, then, is your chief concern?"

"The market"

"How do you mean?"

"There's a market for Rearden Metal and I intend to take full advantage of it."

"Isn't the market somewhat hypothetical? The public response to your metal has not been encouraging Except for the order from the gargantuan Transcontinental you haven't obtained any major—"

"Well then, if you think the public won't go for it what are you worrying about?"

"If the public doesn't go for it you will take a heavy loss Mr Rearden"

"That's my worry not yours"

"Whereas if you adopt a more co-operative attitude and agree to wait for a few years—"

"Why should I wait?"

"But I believe I have made it clear that the State Science Institute does not approve of the appearance of Rearden Metal on the

metallurgical scene at the present time "

"Why should I give a damn about that?"

The man sighed "You are a very difficult man, Mr Rearden."

The sky of the late afternoon was growing heavy, as if thickening against the glass of the windowpanes. The outlines of the man's figure seemed to dissolve into a blob among the sharp, straight planes of the furniture.

"I gave you this appointment," said Rearden, "because you told me that you wished to discuss something of extreme importance. If this is all you had to say, you will please excuse me now. I am very busy."

The man settled back in his chair. "I believe you have spent ten years of research on Rearden Metal," he said. "How much has it cost you?"

Rearden glanced up: he could not understand the drift of the question, yet there was an undisguised purposefulness in the man's voice, the voice had hardened.

"One and a half million dollars," said Rearden.

"How much will you take for it?"

"I cannot believe it." "For

..

" said Rearden

I am offering you a business proposition. You are a businessman. You may name your own price."

"The rights to Rearden Metal are not for sale."

"I am in a position to speak of large sums of money. Government money."

Rearden sat without moving, the muscles of his cheeks pulled tight, but his glance was indifferent, focused only by the faint pull of morbid curiosity.

"You are a businessman, Mr Rearden. This is a proposition which you cannot afford to ignore. On the one hand, you are gambling against great odds; you are bucking an unfavorable public opinion, you run a good chance of losing every penny you put into Rearden Metal. On the other hand, you are offering me the right to sell Rearden Metal immediately for sale."

"nt, not

out," said Rearden. "What is it that they're so afraid of?"

"You are using ugly, unnecessary words, Mr Rearden. I am endeavoring to suggest that we keep the discussion on a friendly plane. The matter is serious."

"I am beginning to see that."

"We are offering you a blank check on what is, as you realize, unlimited account. What else can you want? Name your price."

"The sale of the rights to Rearden Metal is not open to discussion. If you have anything else to say, please say it and leave."

A man leaned back, looked at Rearden incredulously and  
"What are you after?"  
"What do you mean?"  
"You're in business to make money, aren't you?"  
"I am."

"You want to make as big a profit as possible, don't you?"  
"I do."

"Then why do you want to struggle for years, squeezing out your  
profits in the form of pennies per ton—rather than accept a fortune  
for Rearden Metal? Why?"

"Because it's mine. Do you understand the word?"

The man sighed and rose to his feet. "I hope you will not have  
cause to regret your decision, Mr. Rearden," he said, the tone of his  
voice was suggesting the opposite.

"Good day," said Rearden.

"I think I must tell you that the State Science Institute may issue  
an official statement condemning Rearden Metal."

"That is their privilege."

"Such a statement would make things more difficult for you."

"Undoubtedly."

"As to further consequences . . ." The man shrugged. "This is  
not the day for people who refuse to co-operate. In this age, one  
needs friends. You are not a popular man, Mr. Rearden."

"What are you trying to say?"

"Surely, you understand."

"I don't."

"Society is a complex structure. There are so many different  
issues awaiting decision, hanging by a thin thread. We can never  
tell when one such issue may be decided and what may be the de-  
cisive factor in a delicate balance. Do I make myself clear?"

"No."

The red flame of poured steel shot through the twilight. An  
orange glow, the color of deep gold, lit the wall behind Rearden's  
desk. The glow moved gently across his forehead. His face had an  
unmoving serenity.

"The State Science Institute is a government organization. Mr.  
Rearden. There are certain bills pending in the Legislature, which  
may be passed at any moment. Businessmen are peculiarly vulner-  
able these days. I am sure you understand me."

Rearden rose to his feet. He was smiling. He looked as if all  
tension had left him.

"No, Dr. Potter," he said, "I don't understand. If I did, I'd have  
to kill you."

The man walked to the door, then stopped and looked at Rear-  
den in a way which, for once, was simple human curiosity. Rearden  
stood motionless against the moving glow on the wall. He stood  
there . . .

Dagny could not understand Mr Mowen's motive. The Amalgamated Switch and Signal Company had suddenly given notice that they would not complete her order. Nothing had happened; she could find no cause for it and they would give no explanation.

She had hurried to Connecticut, to see Mr Mowen in person, but the sole result of the interview was a heavier, grayer weight of bewilderment in her mind. Mr Mowen stated that he would not continue to make switches of Rearden Metal. For sole explanation, he said, avoiding her eyes: "Too many people don't like it."

"What? Rearden Metal or your making the switches?"

"Both I guess. People don't like it. I don't want any trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Any kind."

Have you heard a single thing against Rearden Metal that's true?"

"Aw, who knows what's true? That resolution of the National Council of Metal Industries said—"

"Look, you've worked with metals all your life. For the last four months you've worked with Rearden Metal. Don't you know that it's the greatest thing you've ever handled? He did not answer. "Don't you know it?" He looked away. "Don't you know what's true?"

"Hell, Miss Taggart, I'm in business. I'm only a little guy. I just want to make money."

"How do you think one makes it?"

But she knew that it was useless. Looking at Mr Mowen's face, at the eyes which she could not catch, she felt as she had felt once on a lonely section of track, when a storm blew down the telephone wires, that communications were cut and that words had become sounds which transmitted nothing.

It was useless to argue, she thought, and to wonder about people who would neither refute an argument nor accept it. Sitting restlessly in the train, on her way back to New York, she told herself that Mr Mowen did not matter, that nothing mattered now, except finding somebody else to manufacture the switches. She was wrestling with a list of names in her mind, wondering who would be easiest to convince, to beg or to bribe.

She knew, the moment she entered the anteroom of her office, that something had happened. She saw the unnatural stillness, with the faces of her staff turned to her as if her entrance were the moment they had all waited for, hoped for and dreaded.

Eddie Willers rose to his feet and started toward the door of her office, as if knowing that she would understand and follow. She wished

they were the use of Rearden Metal." He added, "It was on the radio. It's in the afternoon papers."

"What did they say?"

ly said it, yet it's  
it."  
quiet; he could  
of him by the

ad left on her desk. "They haven't said that Rearden Metal  
d. They haven't said that it's unsafe. What they've done is . . ."  
hands spread and dropped in a gesture of futility.

properties would be of value."  
We can't fight it. It can't be answered," Eddie was saying slowly.  
can't demand a retraction. We can't show them our tests or  
ve anything. They've said nothing. They haven't said a thing  
t could be refuted and embarrass them professionally. It's the  
of a coward. You'd expect it from some con man or black-  
Jer But, Dagny! It's the State Science Institute!"

He nodded silently. She stood, her eyes fixed on some point  
beyond the window.

critical

Eddie

port,

otherhand of road and track workers has forbidden its mem-  
to work on the Rio Norte Line. Jim has left town."

She took her hat and coat off, walked across the room and slowly,  
re deliberately sat down at her desk.

She noticed a large brown envelope lying before her; it bore  
the letterhead of Rearden Steel.

"That came by special messenger, right after you left," said  
she.

She put her hand on the envelope, but did not open it. She knew  
that it was the drawings of the bridge.

After a while, she asked, "Who issued that statement?"

Eddie glanced at her and smiled briefly, bitterly, shaking his  
head. "No," he said. "I thought of that, too. I called the Institute  
at long distance and asked them. No, it was issued by the office of  
Dr. Floyd Ferris, their co-ordinator."

She said nothing.

"But still! Dr. Stadler is the head of that Institute. He is the  
Institute. He must have known about it. He permitted it. He  
did it, it's done in his name . . . Dr. Robert Stadler . . ."

You are an unusual brilliant child who has not  
of life to grasp the full measure of human stupidity I've  
in all my life I'm very tired. "The sincerity of his vo  
genuine He walked slowly away from her "There was a  
when I looked at the tragic mess they've made of this  
wanted to cry out to beg them to listen—I could teach ~~the~~  
to live so much better than they did—but there was nobody to ~~help~~

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She made a movement to rise

Don't go Miss Faggart I'd like you to understand"

She raised her face to him in obedient indifference ~~It was~~  
was not pale but its planes stood out with strangely naked pres-  
sion ~~as if~~ its skin had lost the shades of color

You're young he said At your age, I had the same faith of  
the unlimited power of reason The same brilliant vision of man  
as a rational being I have seen so much since I have been dis-  
illusioned so often I'd like to tell you just one story"

He stood at the window of his office It had grown dark outside  
The darkness seemed to rise from the black cut of the river in  
below A few lights trembled in the water from among the hills  
of the other shore The sky was still the intense blue of evening  
A lonely star low over the earth seemed unnaturally large as  
made the sky look darker

When I was at the Patrick Henry University" he said, "I had  
three pupils I have had many bright students in the past, but the  
three were the kind of sward a teacher prays for If ever you  
could wish to receive the gift of the human mind at its best, you  
and delivered into your hands for guidance they were the gift  
Theirs was the kind of intelligence one expects to see in the future  
changing the course of the world They came from very different  
backgrounds but they were inseparable friends They made  
strange choice of studies They majored in two subjects—  
and Hugh Akston's Physics and philosophy It is not a combi-  
tion of interests one encounters nowadays Hugh Akston was  
distinguished man a great mind unlike the incredible fu-  
ture whom that University has now put in his place ~~As~~  
and I were a little jealous of each other over these three students  
It was a kind of contest between us a friendly contest because  
understood each other I heard Akston saying one day that  
regarded them as his sons I resented it a little "because  
thought of them as mine

He turned and looked at her The bitter lines of age were  
now cutting across his cheeks He said When I endorsed  
establishment of this Institute one of these three damned  
I have not seen him since He used to disturb me in the first  
years I wondered once in a while whether he had been right  
It has ceased to disturb me long ago"

Dagny they didn't say it! . They haven't really said it, yet it's so—and it isn't. That's what's monstrous about it.

His effort was focused on keeping his voice quiet he could control his words. The words were forced out of him by the relieving bewildered indignation of a child screaming in denial his first encounter with evil.

What did they say, Eddie?"

They . . . You'd have to read it." He pointed to the newspaper had left on her desk. "They haven't said that Rearden Metal is unsafe. They haven't said that it's unsafe. What they've done is . . ."

His hands spread and dropped in a gesture of futility.

She saw at a glance what they had done. She saw the sentences may be possible that after a period of heavy usage a sudden failure may appear, though the length of this period cannot be predicted. The possibility of a molecular reaction at present

known, cannot be entirely discounted. Although the tensile strength of the metal is obviously demonstrable certain questions regard to its behavior under unusual stress are not to be ruled out.

Although there is no evidence to support the contention that the use of the metal should be prohibited a further study of its properties would be of value."

"We can't fight it. It can't be answered," Eddie was saying slowly. "We can't demand a retraction. We can't show them our tests or . . ."

He said a thing personally. It's the same man or black-

She stood, her eyes fixed on some point beyond the window. At the end of a dark street, the bulbs of an electric sign kept going on and off as if winking at her maliciously. Eddie gathered his strength and said in the tone of a military port, "Taggart stock has crashed. Ben Nealy quit. The National Brotherhood of Road and Track Workers has forbidden its members to work on the Rio Norte Line. Jim has left town."

She took her hat and coat off, walked across the room and slowly, deliberately sat down in her desk.

She noticed a large brown envelope lying before her. It bore the letterhead of Rearden Steel.

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She said nothing.

"But still! Dr. Stadler is the head of that Institute. He is the Institute. He must have known about it. He permitted it. If it's done in his name . . . Dr. Robert Stadler . . . Do . . ."



remember when we were in college how we used to talk  
about the great names in the world the men of pure intellect  
and we always chose his name as one of them and—  
He stopped "I'm sorry Dagny I know it's no use saying anything  
Only—"

She sat her hand pressed to the brown envelope  
"Dagny he asked his voice low 'what is happening to people?  
Why did that statement succeed?  
obvious and so rotten You'd think  
it in the gutter How could—h  
desperate rebellious anger— how could they accept it  
they read it? Didn't they see? Don't they think? Dagny! What is  
it in people that lets them do this—and how can we live with it?"  
"Quiet Eddie she said quiet Don't be afraid"

The building c  
New Hampshire  
and the sky Fre  
in a virgin fore  
were laid out as  
seen in a valley  
come too close and detract from the buildings austerity  
The white marble of the walls gave it a classical grandeur the  
composition of its rectangular masses gave it the cleanliness the  
beauty of a modern plant. It was an inspired structure. From  
across the river people looked at it with reverence and thought  
of it as a monument to a living man whose character had the  
nobility of the buildings lines Over the entrance a dedication  
was cut into the marble "To the fearless mind To the unswerving  
truth" In a quiet aisle in a bare corridor a small brass plate  
as dozens of other name plates on other doors, said Dr Robert  
Stadler

At the age of twenty-seven Dr Robert Stadler had written  
a treatise on cosmic rays which demolished most of the theories held  
by the scientists who preceded him Those who followed found  
achievement somewhere at the base of any line of inquiry that  
undertook At the age of thirty he was recognized as the greatest  
physicist of his time At thirty-two he became head of the Department  
of Physics of the Patrick Henry University in the days when  
the great University still deserved its glory It was of Dr Robert  
Stadler that a writer had said Perhaps among the phenomena  
of the universe which he is studying none is so miraculous as the  
brain of Dr Robert Stadler himself It was Dr Robert Stadler  
who had once corrected a student "Free scientific inquiry? The  
first adjective is redundant."

At the age of forty Dr Robert Stadler addressed the nation  
endorsing the establishment of a State Science Institute "Set science  
free of the rule of the dollar" he pleaded The issue had hung in  
balance an obscure group of scientists had quietly forced a  
through its long way to the floor of the Legislature there had been  
some public hesitation about the bill some doubt, an uneasiness

one could define The name of Dr Robert Stadler acted upon country like the cosmic rays he studied it pierced any bar-

a cheap desk of ugly yellow oak, a filing cabinet, two chairs, a blackboard chalked with mathematical formulas. Sitting on one of the chairs against a blank wall Dagny thought that the man had an air of ostentation and elegance, together ostentation, because it seemed intended to suggest that the owner was great enough to permit himself such a setting of elegance, because he really needed nothing else.

She had met Dr Stadler on a few occasions, at banquets given to leading businessmen or great engineering societies, in honor of some solemn cause or another. She had attended the occasions reluctantly as he had.

uning, discarding emotion, seeking only to observe and to understand.

"Miss Taggart," he said gaily, "I'm curious about you. I'm curious whenever anything upsets a precedent. As a rule visitors are a painful duty to me. I'm frankly astonished that I should feel such simple pleasure in seeing you here. Do you know what it's like to feel suddenly that one can talk without the strain of trying to get some sort of understanding out of a vacuum?"

He sat on the edge of his desk, his manner gaily informal. He was not tall, and his slenderness gave him an air of youthful energy, almost of boyish zest. His thin face was ageless; it was a homely face, but the great forehead and the large gray eyes held an arresting intelligence that one could notice nothing else.

here were faint look his

"Tell me about yourself," he said. "I always meant to ask you what you're doing in such an unlikely career as heavy industry and how you can stand those people."

"I cannot take too much of your time, Dr Stadler. She spoke in a polite impersonal precision. "And the matter I came to discuss is extremely important."

He laughed. "There's a sign of the businessman—wanting to come to the point at once. Well, by all means. Put don't worry about my time—it's yours. Now, what was it you said you wanted to discuss? Oh yes. Rearden Metal. Not exactly one of the subjects which I'm best informed, but if there's anything I can do for—" His hand moved in a gesture of invitation.

"Do you know the statement issued by this Institute in regard to Rearden Metal?"

He frowned slightly. "Yes I've heard about it."

"Have you read it?"

"No."

"It was intended to prevent the use of Rearden Metal."

"Yes yes I gathered that much."

"Could you tell me why?"

He spread his hands. They were attractive hands—long and bony, beautiful in their suggestion of nervous energy and strength. "I really wouldn't know. That is the province of Dr Ferris. I'm sure he had his reasons. Would you like to speak to Dr Ferris?"

"No. Are you familiar with the metallurgical nature of Rearden Metal, Dr Stadler?"

"Why yes a little. But tell me why are you concerned about it?"

A flicker of astonishment rose and died in her eyes. She answered without change in the impersonal tone of her voice. "I am building a branch line with rails of Rearden Metal, which—"

"Oh, but of course! I did hear something about it. You must forgive me. I don't read the newspapers as regularly as I should. Its

that will letion count

The wrinkles of amusement deepened about his eyes. "Can you make such a statement with positive assurance, Miss Taggart? couldn't."

"In this case?"

"In any case. Nobody can tell what the course of a country's future may be. It is not a matter of calculable trends, but a chaotic subject to the rule of the moment in which anything is possible."

"Do you think that production is necessary to the existence of a country, Dr Stadler?"

"Why yes yes of course."

"The building of our branch line has been stopped by the statement of this Institute."

He did not smile and he did not answer.

"Does that statement represent your conclusion about the nature of Rearden Metal?" she asked.

"I have said that I have not read it." There was an edge of sharpness in his voice.

She opened her bag, took out a newspaper clipping and extended it to him. "Would you read it and tell me whether this is a language which science may properly speak?"

He glanced through the clipping, smiled contemptuously and tossed it aside with a gesture of distaste. "Disgusting isn't it?" he said. "But what can you do when you deal with people?"

She looked at him without understanding. "You do not approve of that statement?"

He shrugged. "My approval or disapproval would be irrelevant."



"You are an unusual brilliant child who has not seen of life to grasp the full measure of human stupidity I at all my life I'm very tired. . ." The sincerity of his voice genuine. He walked slowly away from her. "There was a time when I looked at the tragic mess they've made of this earth, and I wanted to cry out to beg them to listen—I could teach them to do so much better than they did—but there was nobody to hear."

among men and valleys. One summer . . .  
ture or its death."

She made a movement to rise.

"Don't go, Miss Taggart. I'd like you to understand."

She raised her face to him, in obedient indifference. Her face was not pale, but its planes stood out with strangely naked precision as if its skin had lost the shadings of color.

"You're young," he said. "At your age, I had the same faith in the unlimited power of reason. The same brilliant vision of man as a rational being I have seen so much since I have been disillusioned so often. I'd like to tell you just one story."

He stood at the window of his office. It had grown dark outside. The darkness seemed to rise from the black cut of the river below. A few lights trembled in the water from among the hills of the other shore. The sky was still the intense blue of evening. A lonely star low over the earth, seemed unnaturally large and made the sky look darker.

"When I was at the Patrick Henry University," he said, "I had three pupils. I have had many bright students in the past, but these three were the kind of reward a teacher prays for. If ever you could wish to receive the gift of the human mind at its best, you could wish to receive the gift of the human mind at its best, you and delivered into your hands for guidance, they were this. Theirs was the kind of intelligence one expects to see in the future, changing the course of the world. They came from very different backgrounds, but they were inseparable friends. They made a strange choice of studies. They majored in two subjects—mathematics and Hugh Akston's Physics and philosophy. It is not a combination of interests one encounters nowadays. Hugh Akston was a distinguished man, a great mind, unlike the incredible creature whom that University has now put in his place. Akston and I were a little jealous of each other over these three students. It was a kind of contest between us, a friendly contest because we understood each other. I heard Akston saying one day that he regarded them as his sons. I resented it a little. . ." because I thought of them as mine."

He turned and looked at her. The bitter lines of age were there now, cutting across his cheeks. He said, "When I endorsed the establishment of this Institute, one of these three damned fellows I have not seen him since. It used to disturb me in the first years. I wondered once in a while whether he had been right. It has ceased to disturb me, long ago."

He smiled. There was nothing but bitterness now, in his smile and his face.

"These three men, these three who held all the hope which the gift of intelligence ever proffered, these three from whom we expected such a magnificent future—one of them was Francisco d'Anconia, who became a depraved playboy. Another was Ragnar Danneskjöld, who became a plain bandit. So much for the promise of the human mind."

"Who was the third one?" she asked.

He shrugged. "The third one did not achieve even that sort of glorious distinction. He vanished without a trace—into the great down of mediocrity. He is probably a second assistant book-keeper somewhere."

\* \*

"It's a lie! I didn't run away!" cried James Taggart. "I came because I happened to be sick. Ask Dr. Wilson. It's a form he'll prove it. And how did you know that I was here?" Jagny stood in the middle of the room, there were melting flakes on her coat collar, on the brim of her hat. She glanced around, feeling an emotion that would have been sadness, had she time to acknowledge it.

It was a room in the house of the old Taggart estate on the Hudson. Jim had inherited the place, but he seldom came here. In her childhood, this had been their father's study. Now it had the desolate air of a room which is used, yet uninhabited. There were slipcovers on all but two chairs, a cold fireplace and the dismal warmth of an electric heater with a cord twisting across the floor, a desk, its glass surface empty.

Jim lay on the couch, with a towel wrapped for a scarf around his neck. She saw a stage, filled ashtray on a chair beside him, a bottle of whisky, a wilted paper cup, and two-day-old newspapers scattered about the floor. A portrait of their grandfather hung over the fireplace, full figure, with a railroad bridge in the fading background.

"I have no time for arguments, Jim."

"It was your idea! I hope you'll admit to the Board that it was your idea. That's what your goddamn Rearden Metal has done to us! If we had waited for Orren Boyle—" His unshaved face was pulled by a twisted scramble of emotions: panic, hatred, a touch of triumph, the relief of screaming at a victim—and the hint, cautious, begging look that sees a hope of help.

He had stopped tentatively, but she did not answer. She stood watching him, her hands in the pockets of her coat.

"There's nothing we can do now!" he moaned. "I tried to call Washington, to get them to seize the Phoenix Durango and turn it over to us, on the ground of emergency, but they won't even listen! Too many people objecting, they say, afraid of some sort of precedent or another! . . . I got the National Alliance of Laborers to suspend the deadline and permit Dan Conway to get the road for another year—that would have given me time—"

but he's refused to do it! I tried to get Ellis Wyatt and his bunch of friends in Colorado to demand that Washington order Conway to continue operations—but all of them, Wyatt and all the rest of those bastards, refused! It's *their* skin, worse than ours, they're sure to go down the drain—but they've refused!

She smiled briefly, but made no comment.

'Now there's nothing left for us to do! We're caught. We can't give up that branch and we can't complete it. We can't stop or go on. We have no money. Nobody will touch us with a ten-foot pole! What have we got left without the Rio Norte Line? But we can't finish it. We'd be boycotted. We'd be blacklisted. That union of track workers would sue us. They would, there's a law about it. We can't complete that Line! Christ! What are we going to do?'

She waited. Through Jim? she asked coldly. "If you are, I'll tell you what we're going to do."

He kept silent, looking up at her from under his heavy eyelids.

"This is not a proposal, Jim. It's an ultimatum. Just listen and accept. I am going to complete the construction of the Rio Norte Line. I personally, not Taggart, will be in charge of it. I will be absent from the job of absence from the job."

"In my own name. Your business. I will act as my own boss. I will take full charge of the Line on time. After you have seen how the Rearden Metal can take it, I will transfer the Line back to Taggart Transcontinental and I'll return to my job. That is all."

He was looking at her silently, dangling a bedroom slipper on the tip of his foot. She had never supposed that hope could look ugly in a man's face, but it did. It was mixed with cunning. She turned her eyes away from him, wondering how it was possible that a man's first thought in such a moment could be a search for something to put over on her.

Then, preposterously, the first thing he said, his voice anxious, was, "But who will run Taggart Transcontinental in the meantime?"

She chuckled. The sound astonished her, it seemed mild in its bitterness. She said, "Eddie Willers."

"Oh, no! He couldn't!"

She laughed in the same brusque, mirthless way. "I thought you were smarter than I about things of this kind. Eddie will assume the title of Acting Vice President. He will occupy my office and sit at my desk. But who do you suppose will run Taggart Transcontinental?"

"But I don't see how—"

"I will commute by plane between Eddie's office and Colorado. Also, there are long-distance phones available. I will do just what I have been doing. Nothing will change, except the kind of show you will put on for your friends . . . and the fact that it will be a little harder for me."

"What show?"

"You understand me, Jim I have no idea what sort of games I'm tangled in, you and your Board of Directors I don't know many ends you're all playing against the middle and against another, or how many pretenses you have to keep up in how many opposite directions I don't know or care You can all hide and me If you're all afraid, because you've made deals with ends who're threatened by Rearden Metal—well, here's your chance to go through the motions of assuring them that you're involved, that you're not doing this—I am You can help them to some and denounce me You can all stay home, take no risks and be no enemies Just keep out of my way"

"Well," he said slowly, "of course, the problems involved the policy of a great railroad system are complex while small, independent company, in the name of one person, could

"Yes Jim yes, I know all that. The moment you announce that I'm turning the Rio Norte Line over to me the Taggart stock I rise The bedbugs will stop crawling from out of unlikely corners since they won't have the incentive of a big company to bite before they decide what to do about me I will have the Line fined And as for me, I don't want to have you and your Board to count to, to argue with, to beg permissions from There isn't time for that, if I am to do the kind of job that has to be done I'm going to do it alone"

"And if you fail?"

"If I fail, I'll go down alone"

"You understand that in such case Taggart Transcontinental will be able to help you in any way?"

"I understand"

"You will not count on us?"

"No"

"You will cut all official connection with us, so that your activities will not reflect upon our reputation?"

"Yes"

"I think we should agree that in case of failure or public scandal your leave of absence will become permanent that you will not expect to return to the post of Vice President"

She closed her eyes for a moment. "All right, Jim In such case, I will not return."

"Before we transfer the Rio Norte Line to you we must have written agreement that you will transfer it back to us along with our controlling interest at cost, in case the Line becomes successful Otherwise you might try to squeeze us for a windfall profit, we need that Line"

There was only a brief stab of shock in her eyes then she said serenely, the words sounding as if she were tossing alms, "By all means Jim Have that stated in writing."

"Now as to your temporary successor"

"Yes?"

"You don't really want it to be Eddie Willers, do you?"

"Yes. I do."



'But he couldn't even *act* like a vice president! He doesn't *have* the presence, the manner, the—'

'He knows his work and mine. He knows what I want. I trust him I'll be able to work with him.'

'Don't you think it would be better to pick one of our most distinguished young men, somebody from a good family, with more social poise and—'

'It's going to be Eddie Willers, Jim'

He sighed "All right Only . . . only we must be careful about it . . . We don't want people to suspect that it's you who're still running Taggart Transcontinental Nobody must know it"

"Everybody will know it, Jim But since nobody will admit openly, everybody will be satisfied"

"But we must preserve appearances"

"Oh, certainly! You don't have to recognize me on the street, you don't want to You can say you've never seen me before and I'll say I've never heard of Taggart Transcontinental"

He remained silent, trying to think, staring down at the floor She turned to look at the grounds beyond the window The sky had the even, gray white pallor of winter Far below, on the shore of the Hudson, she saw the road she used to watch it Francisco's car—she saw the cliff over the river, where they climbed to look for the towers of New York—and somewhere beyond the woods were the trails that led to Rockdale Station The earth was snow-covered now, and what remained was like the skeleton of the countryside she remembered—a thin design of bare branches rising from the snow to the sky It was gray and white, like a photograph of a dead photograph which one keeps hopefully for remembrance but which has no power to bring back anything

"What are you going to call it?"

She turned startled "What?"

"What are you going to call your company?"

"Oh . . . Why, the Dagny Taggart Line, I guess"

"But . . . Do you think that's wise? It might be misunderstood The Taggart might be taken as—"

"Well, what do you want me to call it?" she snapped, worked down to anger "The Miss Nobody? The Madam X? The John Galt?" She stopped She smiled suddenly, a cold bright, dangerous smile "That's what I'm going to call it the John Galt Line."

"Good God, no!"

"Yes"

"But it's . . . it's just a cheap piece of slang!"

"Yes"

"You can't make a joke out of such a serious project! . . . You can't be so vulgar and . . . and undignified!"

"Can't I?"

"But for God's sake why?"

"Because it's going to shock all the rest of them just as it shocks you"

"I've never seen you playing for effects"

"I am, this time."

"His voice dropped to an almost superstitious sound  
Dagny, you know it's its bad luck. What is  
for?" He stopped  
"What does it stand for?"  
"I don't know. But the way people use it, they always  
to say it out of—"

"Despair? Futility?"  
"Yes, that's what it is."  
"That's what I want to throw in their faces!"  
The bright, sparkling anger in her eyes, her first look of enjoy-  
ment, made him understand that he had to keep still.  
He drew up all the papers and all the red tape in the name of the  
"Galt Line," she said.

"Sighed 'Well, it's your Line.'"  
"You bet it is!"  
She glanced at her astonished. She had dropped the manners and  
of a vice president; she seemed to be relaxing happily to the  
of yard crews and construction gangs.  
As to the papers and the legal side of it, he said "there might  
be some difficulties. We would have to apply for the permission."

He whirled to face him. Something of the bright, violent look  
remained in her face. But it was not gay and she was not  
laughing. The look now had an odd, primitive quality. When he saw  
it, he hoped he would never have to see it again.  
"Listen, Jim," she said, "he had never heard that tone in any  
man's voice. 'There is one thing you can do as your part of the  
job, and you'd better do it: keep your Washington boys off. See  
to it that they give me all the permissions, authorizations, charters,  
other waste paper that their laws require. Don't let them try  
to stop me. If they try, Jim, people say that our ancestor Nat  
part, killed a politician.'"  
"I would never have had to  
say it or not. But I'll tell you  
he didn't—I might do it."  
"And I mean it, Jim."

\* \* \*

Francisco d'Anconia sat in front of her desk. His face was blank.  
It had remained blank while Dagny explained to him, in the clear,  
personal tone of a business interview, the formation and purpose  
of her own railroad company. He had listened. He had not pro-  
duced a word.  
She had never seen his face wear that look of drained passivity.  
There was no mockery, no amusement, no antagonism; it was as if  
it did not belong in these particular moments of existence and could  
not be reached. Yet his eyes looked at her attentively; they seemed  
to see more than she could suspect; they made her think of one-  
way glass: they let all light rays in, but none out.  
"Francisco, I asked you to come here because I wanted you to  
be in my office. You've never seen it. It would have  
something to you, once."

His eyes moved slowly to look at the office. Its walls were bare except for three things: a map, an original drawing of Nat Taggart's statue—and a large railroad calendar the kind that was distributed as a picture to every station along the Taggart line, which had hung once in her first work place at Rockdale.

He got up. He said quietly, "Dagny, for your own sake and it was a barely perceptible hesitation—"and in the name of a pity you might feel for me, don't request what you're going to request. Don't. Let me go now."

This was not like him and like nothing she could ever have expected to hear from him. After a moment she asked, "Why?"

"I can't answer you. I can't answer any questions. That is one of the reasons why it's best not to discuss it."

"You know what I am going to request?"

"Yes." The way she looked at him was such an eloquent, desperate question, that he had to add, "I know that I am going to refuse."

"Why?"

He smiled mirthlessly, spreading his hands out, as if to show her that this was what he had predicted and had wanted to avoid.

She said quietly, "I have to try, Francisco. I have to make a request. That's my part. What you'll do about it is yours. I'll know that I've tried everything."

He remained standing but he inclined his head a little, assent, and said, "I will listen if that will help you."

"I need fifteen million dollars to complete the Rio Norte Line. I have obtained seven million against the Taggart stock I own, and clear. I can raise nothing else. I will issue bonds in the name of my new company in the amount of eight million dollars. I called you here to ask you to buy these bonds."

He did not answer.

"I am simply a beggar, Francisco, and I am begging you for money. I had always thought that one did not beg in business; I thought that one stood on the merit of what one had to offer and gave value for value. This is not so any more, though I do understand how we can act on any other rule and continue to exist. Judging by every objective fact, the Rio Norte Line is to be the best investment in the world."

"I can only plead the merits of my company. So I can't plead merit. I can only plead."

Her voice was pronouncing the words with impersonal precision. She stopped waiting for his answer. He remained silent.

"I know that I have nothing to offer you," she said. "I can speak to you in terms of investment. You don't care to make money. Industrial projects have ceased to concern you long ago. So I will pretend that it's a fair exchange. It's just begging." She drew

th and said "Give me that money as alms because it means  
ing to you"

Don't" he said his voice low She could not tell whether the  
ice sound of it was pain or anger his eyes were lowered.  
Will you do it, Francisco?

No"  
After a moment she said "I called you not because I thought  
would agree but because you were the only one who could  
erstand what I am saying So I had to try it Her voice was  
pping lower as if she hoped it would make emotion harder to  
ict. "You see I can't believe that you're really gone be  
I know that you're still able to hear me The way you live  
aved But the way you act is not Even the way you speak of it  
ot. I had to try But I can't struggle to understand you  
'longer"

Til give you a hint. Contradictions do not exist Whenever you  
sk that you are facing a contradiction check your premises  
u will find that one of them is wrong"

"Francisco" she whispered, why don't you tell me what it was  
t happened to you?"

"Because at this moment the answer would hurt you more  
in the doubt

"Is it as terrible as that?"

"It is an answer which you must reach by yourself"

She shook her head "I don't know what to offer you I don't  
see that even  
e reason why  
at one

At it meant a great deal to you—success Industrial success Re-  
ember how we used to talk about it? You were very severe You  
pected a lot from me You told me I'd better live up to it I have  
ou wondered how far I'd rise with Taggart Transcontinental" She  
oved her hand pointing at the office. This is how far I've  
been  
f what had been your  
as amusement or a  
flowers on a grave  
in the name of

"No"

She said with effort "That money would mean nothing to you—  
you've wasted that much on senseless parties—you've wasted much  
more on the San Sebastián Mines—

He glanced up He looked straight at her and she saw the first  
mark of a living response in his eyes a look that was bright piti-  
ful and incredibly proud as if this were an accusation that gave  
him strength.

"Oh, yes," she said slowly as if answering his thought "I  
realize that. I've damned you for those mines I've denounced you  
I've thrown my contempt at you in every way possible and now  
I come back to you—for money Like Jim like any moocher you've  
ever met. I know it's a triumph for you, I know that you can laugh

at me and  
you that. If  
and the M -  
me? Would

acknowledge that I'm beaten by you? Don't you want to see me  
crawling before you? Tell me what form of it you'd like and I  
submit."

He moved so swiftly that she could not notice how he started,  
only seemed to her that his first movement was a shudder. As  
came around the desk, he took her hand and raised it to his lips.  
It began as a gesture of the gravest respect, as if its purpose were  
to give her strength, but as he held his lips, then his face, pressed  
her hand, she knew that he was seeking strength from it himself.

He dropped her hand, he looked down at her face, at the frozen  
stiffness of her eyes, he smiled, not trying to hide that  
smile held suffering, anger and tenderness.

"Dagny, you want to crawl? You don't know what the word  
means and never will. One doesn't crawl by acknowledging it  
honestly as that. Don't you suppose I know that your begging  
was the bravest thing you could do? But . . . Don't ask me  
Dagny."

"In the name of anything I ever meant to you . . ." she whis-  
pered, "anything left within you . . ."

In the moment when she thought that she had seen this before,  
before, that this was the way he had looked against the night sky  
of the city, when he lay in bed by her side for the last time—  
heard his cry, the kind of cry she had never torn from him before.

"My love, I can't!"

Then as the foot . . . . .  
. . . . .

casual

"Please excuse the mixture in styles of expression I've been  
posed to say that to so many women, but on somewhat different  
occasions."

Her head dropped, she sat huddled tight together, not caring  
he saw it.

When she raised her head, she looked at him indifferently  
right, Francisco. It was a good act. I did believe it. If that was  
own way of having the kind of fun I was offering you, you  
ceded. I won't ask you for anything."

"I warned you."

"I didn't know which side you belonged on. It didn't seem  
sible—but it's the side of Otten Boyle and Bertram Scudder,  
your old teacher."

"My old teacher?"

. . . . .  
? He's the looter who  
y means" He added,  
which side you

one day I'll remind you of it and ask you whether you'll repeat it."

"You won't have to remind me."

He turned to go. He tossed his hand in a casual salute and "If it could be built, I'd wish good luck to the Rio Norte."

"It's going to be built. And it's going to be called the John Galt."

"What?"

It was an actual scream she chuckled derisively. "The John Line."

"Dagny in heaven's name why?"

"Don't you like it?"

"How did you happen to choose that?"

"It sounds better than Mr. Nemo or Mr. Zero, doesn't it?"

"Dagny, why that?"

"Because it frightens you."

"What do you think it stands for?"

"The impossible. The unattainable. And you're all afraid of my just as you're afraid of that name."

He started laughing. He laughed not looking at her and she strangely certain that he had forgotten her that he was far from that he was laughing—in furious gaiety and bitterness—at nothing in which she had no part.

When he turned to her he said earnestly "Dagny, I wouldn't, were you?"

He shrugged. "Jim didn't like it, either."

"What do you like about it?"

"I hate it! I hate the doom you're all waiting for the giving and that senseless question that always sounds like a cry for help. I'm sick of hearing pleas for John Galt. I'm going to fight."

He said quietly, "You are."

"I'm going to build a railroad line for him. Let him come and see it."

He smiled sadly and nodded. "He will."

\* \* \*

The glow of poured steel streamed across the ceiling and broke against one wall. Rearden sat at his desk in the light of a single lamp. Beyond its circle the darkness of the office blended with the darkness outside. He felt as if he were empty space where the light of the furnaces moved at will as if the desk were a raft hanging in mid-air holding two persons imprisoned in privacy. Dagny sat in front of his desk.

She had thrown her coat off and she sat outlined against it, a tense body in a gray suit, leaning diagonally across the wide chair. Only her hand lay in the light on the edge of the desk. Beyond it, he saw the pale suggestion of her face the white of a throat the triangle of an open collar.

"All right, Hank," she said "we're going ahead with a new

Rearden Metal bridge This is the official order of the official owners of the John Galt Line"

th  
s I

Yes You don't need my comments or compliments she says it."

"Very well Thank you I'll start rolling the Metal."

Don't you want to ask whether the John Galt Line is in a position to place orders or to function?

I don't need to Your coming here says it"

She smiled "True It's all set Hank. I came to tell you that to discuss the details of the bridge in person."

"All right I am curious who are the bondholders of the John Galt Line?"

"I don't think any of them could afford it. All of them big growing enterprises All of them needed their money for their own concerns But they needed the Line and they did not ask anyone for help She took a paper out of her bag "Here's John Galt, Inc she said handing it across the desk."

He knew most of the names on the list Ellis Wyatt, Wyatt Colorado Ted Nielsen Nielsen Motors Colorado Lawrence Hammond Hammond Cars Colorado Andrew Stockton, Stock Foundry Colorado There were a few from other states he noticed the name "Kenneth Danagger Danagger Coal Pennsylvania The amounts of their subscriptions varied from sums in five figures six

He reached for his fountain pen, wrote at the bottom of the "Henry Rearden Rearden Steel Pennsylvania—\$1 000 000" and tossed the list back to her

"Hank she said quietly I didn't want you in on this You've invested so much in Rearden Metal that it's worse for you than for any of us You can't afford another risk"

"I never accept favors" he answered coldly

"What do you mean?"

"I don't ask people to take greater chances on my ventures than I take myself If it's a gamble I'll match anybody's gamble Didn't you say that that track was my first showcase?"

She inclined her head and said gravely "All right. Thank you"

"Incidentally I don't expect to lose this money I am aware of the conditions under which these bonds can be converted stock at my option. I therefore expect to make an inordinate profit and you're going to earn it for me."

She laughed "God Hank I've spoken to so many yellow faces that they've almost infected me into thinking of the Line as a hopeless loss! Thanks for reminding me. Yes I think I'll earn a more moderate profit for you"

"If it weren't for the yellow fools there wouldn't be any in it at all But we have to beat them We will" He reached two telegrams from among the papers on his desk "There are

"in a sentence." He extended the magazine. "I think  
like to see these."

One of them read: "I had intended to undertake it in '20, but  
the statement of the '21-22 Season Ignorance committee was so pre-  
sented. Consider this a commitment for the construction of  
each pipe line of Boulder Metal, & C. Co., Colorado to Amer-  
ican Details follow. E. W. W. W."

Another read: "Re our statement of my order Go ahead. E. W. W."

He added, in explanation, "He wasn't prepared to proceed at  
either 1's eight thousand tons of Boulder Metal Structural  
1. For coal mines."

They glanced at each other and smiled. They needed no further  
word.

She glanced down, as she handed the telegrams back to him. The  
of her hand looked transparent in the light, on the side of his  
a young girl's hand with long, thin fingers, raised for a  
moment, defenseless.

"The Suction Foundry in Colorado," she said, "is going to find  
order for me—the one that the Americans and Swedes and a small  
company ran out on. They're going to get in touch with you about  
Metal."

"They have already. What have you done about the construction  
of?"

"Healy's engineers are staying on, the best ones those I need.  
Most of the foremen, too. It won't be too hard to keep them  
if Healy wasn't of much use, anyway."

"What about labor?"  
"More applicants than I can hire. I don't think the union is  
going to interfere. Most of the applicants are giving phony names  
as to union members. They need the work desperately. I'll  
have a few guards on the line, but I don't expect any trouble."

"What about your brother Jim's Board of Directors?"  
"They're all scrambling to get statements into the newspapers  
to the effect that they have no connection whatever with the John  
D. Line and how reprehensible an undertaking they think it is.  
They agreed to everything I asked."

The line of her shoulders looked taut, yet thrown back easily,  
as if poised for flight. Tension seemed natural to her—not a sign  
of anxiety, but a sign of enjoyment, the tension of her whole body,  
under the gray suit, half visible in the darkness.

"Eddie Willers has taken over the office of Operating Vice-  
President," she said. "If you need anything, get in touch with him.  
He's leaving for Colorado tonight."

"Tonight?"

"Yes. We have to make up time. We've lost a week."

"Flying your own plane?"

"Yes. I'll be back in about ten days. I intend to be in New York  
two or three a month."

"Where will you live out there?"



On the site In my own railway car—that is Eddie's car whom I'm borrowing"

Will you be safe?"

Safe from what? Then she laughed startled "Why Hank, the first time you've ever thought that I wasn't a man. Of course I'll be safe

He was not looking at her he was looking at a sheet of figures on his desk I've had my share of the bridge he said construction time required. Then he extended the papers

A wedge of light fell in his mouth in sharp outline. Then only a suggestion of its shape and the dark lines of her lower lashes

Haven't I?—he thought Haven't I thought of it since the first time I saw you? Haven't I thought of nothing else for two years?

He sat motionless looking at her. He heard the words he had never allowed himself to form the words he had felt known to him as if I

Nothing but your body that mouth of yours and the way your eyes would look at me if. Through every sentence I ever said to you through every conference you thought so safe through the importance of all the issues we discussed. You trusted me didn't you? To recognize your greatness? To think of you as you deserved—as if you were a man? Don't you suppose I know how much I've betrayed? The only bright encounter of my life—the only person I respected—the best businessman I know—morally—my partner in a desperate battle. The lowest of all desires—as my answer to the highest I've met. Do you know what I am? I thought of it because it should have been unthinkable. For that degrading need which should never touch you I have never wanted anyone but you. I hadn't known what it was like to want it until I saw you for the first time. I had thought. Not I I couldn't be broken by it. Since then for many years with not a moment's respite. Do you know what it's like to want it? Would you wish to hear what I thought when I looked at you when I lay awake at night when I heard your voice over a telephone wire when I worked but could not drive it away? To bring you down to their level you can't conceive—and to know that it's I who have done it. I need it to see you asking me for it to see your wonderful spirit dependent upon the obscenity of your need. To watch you as you are as you face the world with your clean proud strength—then I see you in my bed submitting to any infamous whim I may devise to any act which I'll perform for the sole purpose of watching your dishonor and to which you'll submit for the sake of an un-



Arizona and Colorado Rearden's engineers had hunted by telephone for private truck owners and had offered payments that cut all arguments short

It was the third of three shipments of copper that Rearden had expected two orders had not been delivered one company had gone out of business the other was still pleading delays that it could not help

He had attended to the matter without breaking his chain of appointments without raising his voice, without sign of strain, uncertainty or apprehension, he had acted with the swift precision of a military commander under sudden fire—and Gwen Ives his secretary had acted as his calmest lieutenant She was a girl in her late twenties whose quietly harmonious impenetrable face had a quality matching the best-designed office equipment she was one of his most ruthlessly competent employees, her manner of performing her duties suggested the kind of rational cleanliness that would consider any element of emotion, while at work, as an unpardonable immorality

When the emergency was over her sole comment was "Mr Rearden I think we should ask all our suppliers to ship via Taggart Transcontinental" "I'm thinking that too," he answered he added "Wire Fleming in Colorado Tell him I'm taking an option on that copper mine property"

He was back at his desk speaking to his superintendent on one phone and to his purchasing manager on another, checking weight and ton of ore on hand—he could not leave to chance or to another person the possibility of a single hour's delay in the flow of a furnace It was the last of the rail for the John Galt Line that was being poured—when the buzzer rang and Miss Ives' voice announced that his mother was outside demanding to see him

He had asked his family never to come to the mills without appointment He had been glad that they hated the place and a storm appeared in his office What he now felt was a violent impulse to order his mother off the premises Instead with a greater effort than the problem of the train wreck had required of him he said quietly "All right. Ask her to come in"

His mother came in with an air of belligerent defensiveness She looked at his office as if she knew what it meant to him and as if she were declaring her resentment against anything being of greater importance to him than her own person She took a long time settling down in an armchair, arranging and rearranging her bag her gloves the folds of her dress while droning "It's a fine thing when a mother has to wait in an anteroom: ask permission of a stenographer before she's allowed to see own son who—"

"Mother is it anything important? I am very rushed today"

"You're not the only one who's got problems Of course important Do you think I'd go to the trouble of driving way here if it wasn't important?"

"What is it?"

"It's about Philip"

"Yes?"

"Philip is unhappy."

"Well?"

"He feels it's not right that he should have to depend on your pity and live on handouts and never be able to count on a single dollar of his own."

"Well," he said with a startled smile, "I've been waiting for him to realize that."

"It isn't right for a sensitive man to be in such a position."

"It certainly isn't."

"I'm glad you agree with me. So what you have to do is give him a job."

"A . . . what?"

"You must give him a job, here, at the mills—but a nice, clean one of course, with a desk and an office and a decent salary, where he wouldn't have to be among your day laborers and your smelly races."

He knew that he was hearing it, he could not make himself believe it. "Mother, you're not serious."

"I certainly am. I happen to know that that's what he wants, only he's too proud to ask you for it. But if you offer it to him and make it look like it's you who're asking him a favor—why, I know he'd be happy to take it. That's why I had to come here to talk to you—so he wouldn't guess that I put you up to it."

It was not in the nature of his consciousness to understand the nature of the things he was hearing. A single thought cut through his mind like a spotlight, making him unable to conceive how any man could miss it. The thought broke out of him as a cry of disbelief. "But he knows nothing about the steel business!"

"What has he?"

" . . . . . "

"He needs to feel that he's wanted."

"Here? What could I want him for?"

"You hire plenty of strangers."

"I hire men who produce. What has he got to offer?"

"He's your brother, isn't he?"

"What has that got to do with it?"

She stared incredulously, in turn, silenced by shock. For a moment, they sat looking at each other, as if across an interplanetary distance.

"He's your brother," she said, her voice like a phonograph record repeating a magic formula she could not permit herself to doubt.

"He needs a position in the world. He needs a salary so that he'd feel that he's got money coming to him as his due, not as alms."

"As his due? But he wouldn't be worth a nickel to me."

"Is that what you think of first? Your profit? I'm asking you to help your brother, and you're figuring how to make a nickel on him and you won't help him unless there's money in it for you—"

"Is that it?" She saw the expression of his eyes, and she looked away,

but spoke hastily, her voice rising "Yes, sure, you're helping him—like you'd help any stray beggar *Material* help—that's all you know or understand Have you thought about his *spiritual* needs? — — — — — doesn't want — — — — — for work

"You'd never miss it You've got enough people here who're making money for you"

"Are you asking me to help him stage a fraud of that kind?"

"You don't have to put it that way"

"Is it a fraud—or isn't it?"

"That's why I can't talk to you—because you're not human You have no pity, no feeling for your brother, no compassion for his feelings"

"Is it a fraud or not?"

"You have no mercy for anybody"

"Do you think that a fraud of this kind would be just?"

You're the most immoral man living—you think of nothing but justice! You don't feel any love at all!"

He got a big moment about and stressed the movement of "Mother,

language,

nothing more

"Don't ever speak to me again about a job for Philip I would not give him the job of a cinder sweeper I would not allow him inside my mills I want you to understand that, once and for all You may try to help him in any way you wish, but don't ever let me see you thinking of my mills as a means to that end"

The wrinkles of her soft chin trickled into a shape resembling a sneer "What are they your mills—a holy temple of some kind?"

"Why yes" he said softly, astonished at the thought.

"Don't you ever think of people and of your moral duties?"

"I don't know what it is that you choose to call morality No I don't think of people—except that if I gave a job to Philip, wouldn't be able to face any competent man who needed work and deserved it"

She sat a little and the right

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"he said  
le ever t

unpise you enough to believe that you mean it"

The look on her face astonished him more than all the rest it was

his life

he man did not state it in such terms but Rearden knew that was the essence of the case. What the man put into words was a plea for five hundred tons of steel. It was Mr. Ward of the Ward Harvester Company of Minnesota, was an unpretentious company with an unblemished reputation, kind of business concern that seldom grows large but never

... left in the country. I don't know what reason to offer as to why you should want to make an exception in my case. There was nothing else for me to do except close the doors of my plant for good, and I"—there was a slight break in his voice—"I can't quite see my way to closing the doors as yet, so I thought I'd speak to you even if I didn't have much chance. I had to try everything possible."

This was language that Rearden could understand. "I wish I could help you out," he said, "but this is the worst possible time for me because of a very large, very special order that has to take precedence over everything."

"I know. But would you just give me a hearing, Mr. Rearden?"

"Sure."

"If it's a question of money I'll pay anything you ask. If I could make it worth your while that way, why charge me any extra you please charge me."

are bound to improve, they've got to or else we'll—" He did not finish. He said firmly, "They've got to."

"They will," said Rearden.

as if miles apart across the country, he and Dagny Taggart now stood in empty space, their way cleared, free to finish the job. They'll leave us alone to do it, he thought. The words were like a battle hymn in his mind. They'll leave us alone.

"Our plant capacity is one thousand harvesters per year," said Mr. Ward. Last year, we put out three hundred. I scraped the steel together from bankruptcy sales, and begging a few tons here and there from big companies, and just going around like a scavenger to all sorts of unlikely places—well, I won't bore you with that, only I never thought I'd live to see the time when I'd have to do business that way. And all the while Mr. Orren Boyle was swearing to me that he was going to deliver the steel next week. But whatever he managed to pour, it went to new customers of his for some reason nobody would mention, only I heard it whispered that they were men with some sort of political pull. And now I can't even get to Mr. Boyle at all. He's in Washington, been there for over a month. And all his office tells me is just that they can't help it, because they can't get the ore."

"Don't waste your time on them," said Rearden. "You'll never

Now Mr. Boyle's got a radio program, as

about. It's not true, but I don't think it would be right if it were true. So I say that what I need the steel for is to save my own business. Because it's mine. Because if I had to close it . . . oh well, nobody understands that nowadays."

"I do."

"Yes. Yes. I think you would. . . So, you see that's my first concern. But still there are my customers too. They've dealt with me for years. They're counting on me. It's just about impossible to get any sort of machinery anywhere. Do you know what it's like

to be like, out in Minnesota, when the farmers can't get tools,  
machines break down in the middle of the harvest season  
Orren  
there  
my

out of  
duled

lyance for urgent orders, for the next six months But The  
Galt Line, he thought If he could do that, he could do any-  
... He felt as if he wished to undertake ten new problems  
He felt as if this were a world where nothing was impos-  
to him

ook," he said, reaching for the telephone, "let me check with  
superintendent and see just what we're pouring in the next few  
ks. Maybe I'll find a way to borrow a few tons from some of  
orders and—"

Mr Ward looked quickly away from him, but Rearden had caught  
glimpse of his face It's so much for him, thought Rearden, and  
little for me!

steps should sound a shred of discipline away from staggering  
e said, "Excuse me for interrupting, Mr Rearden," but he knew  
he did not see the office, did not see Mr Ward saw nothing  
t him "I thought I must tell you that the Legislature has just  
used the Equalization of Opportunity Bill"

It was the stolid Mr Ward who screamed "Oh God, no! Oh, no!"  
staring at Rearden.

Rearden had leaped to his feet He stood unnaturally bent, one  
shoulder down—

instant Then he looked  
"Excuse me" his glance  
and sat down again

not informed that the Bill had been brought to the  
"were we?" he asked, his voice controlled and dry

"No, Mr Rearden Apparently, it was a surprise move and it  
took them just forty five minutes"

"Have you heard from Mouch?"

"No, Mr Rearden" She stressed the no "It was the office boy  
from the fifth floor who came running in to tell me that he'd just  
heard it on the radio I called the newspapers to verify it I tried to  
reach Mr Mouch in Washington His office does not answer"

"When did we hear from him last?"

"Ten days ago, Mr Rearden"

"All right. Thank you, Gwen Keep trying to get his office"

"Yes, Mr Rearden."

She walked out. Mr. Ward was on his feet, hat in hand He  
said, "I guess I'd better—"



'Sit down!' Rearden snapped fiercely.

Mr Ward obeyed, staring at him.

"We had business to transact, didn't we?" said Rearden. Mr. Ward could not define the emotion that contorted Rearden's mouth as he spoke "Mr Ward, what is it that the foulest bastards on earth denounce us for, among other things? Oh yes, for our motto of 'Business as usual' Well—business as usual, Mr Ward!"

He picked up the telephone receiver and asked for his superintendent 'Say, Pete What? Yes, I've heard Can it We'll talk about that later What I want to know is, could you let me have five hundred tons of steel, extra, above schedule, in the next few weeks? Yes, I know . . . I know it's tough Give me the dates and the figures" He listened, rapidly jotting notes down on a sheet of paper Then he said, "Right Thank you," and hung up

He studied the figures for a few moments, making some brief calculations on the margin of the sheet Then he raised his head.

"All right, Mr Ward," he said "You will have your steel in ten days"

When Mr Ward had gone, Rearden came into the anteroom. He said to Miss Ives, his voice normal, 'Wire Fleming in Colorado. He'll know why I have to cancel that option" She inclined her head, in the manner of a nod signifying obedience She did not look at him

He turned to his next caller and said, with a gesture of invitation toward his office, "How do you do Come in"

He would think of it later, he thought, one moves step by step and one must keep moving For the moment, with an unnatural clarity, with a brutal simplification that made it almost easy, his consciousness contained nothing but one thought It must not stop me The sentence hung alone, with no past and no future He did not think of what it was that must not stop him, or why this sentence was such a crucial absolute It held him and he obeyed He went step by step He completed his schedule of appointments, as scheduled.

It was late . . . out of his office . . . one at his desk in . . . his clasped tightly . . . but he's rigidly level, and her face seemed frozen Tears were running down her cheeks with no sound with no facial movement, against his resistance, beyond control

She saw " . . . m sorry, Mr Rearden," . . . her face

He appr . . . She look . . . He smil-

Gwen? Is . . . timating

"I could have taken the rest of it," she whispered, "but they"—she pointed at the newspapers on her desk—they're calling it a victory for anti greed"

laughed aloud "I can see where such a distortion of the sh language would make you furious," he said "But what else?" she looked at him, her mouth relaxed a little The victim n she could not protect was her only point of reassurance in a dissolving around her

moved his hand gently across her forehead, it was an unusual k of formality for him, and a silent acknowledgment of the s at which he had not laughed "Go home, Gwen. I won't need tonight I'm going home myself in just a little while No, I don't t you to wait."

was past midnight, when, still sitting at his desk, bent over blue- of the bridge for the John Galt Lane, he stopped his work uptly, because emotion reached him in a sudden stab, not to be ped any longer, as if a curtain of anesthesia had broken le slumped down, halfway, still holding onto some shred of re- sence, and sat, his chest pressed to the edge of the desk to stop his head hanging down, as if the only achievement still pos- sible to him was not to let his head drop down on the desk. He sat t way for a few moments, conscious of nothing but pain, a burning pain without content or limit—he sat not knowing ether it was in his mind or his body, reduced to the terrible ness of pain that stopped thought

In a few moments, it was over He raised his head and sat up right, quietly, leaning back against his chair Now he saw that in

from no th — — —

of drove out of him, he was to have no voice, no purpose, no y no defense

He thought of this in astonishment He saw for the first time that he had never known fear because, against any disaster, he had held a omnipotent cure of being able to act No, he thought, not an surance of victory—who can ever have that?—only the chance t act, which is all one needs Now he was contemplating, im- personally and for the first time, the real heart of terror being elivered to destruction with one's hands tied behind one's back.

Well, then, go on with your hands tied, he thought Go on in dains. Go on It must not stop you But another voice was elling him things he did not want to hear, while he fought back, ying through and against it There's no point in thinking of that there's no use . . . what for? . . . leave it alone!

He could not choke it off He sat still, over the drawings of the bridge for the John Galt Lane, and heard the things released by a voice that was part-sound, part-sight They decided it without him.

They did not call for him, they did not ask, they did not let him speak.

They were not bound even by the duty to let him know—to let him know that they had slashed part of his life away and that he had to be ready to walk on as a cripple . . . Of

those concerned, whoever they were, for whichever reason, whatever need, he was the one they had not had to consider

The sign at the end of a long road said Rearden Ore. It lay over black tiers of metal . . . and over years and nights . . . a clock ticking drops of his blood away . . . the blood he had given gladly, exultantly in payment for a distant day and a sign over the road . . . paid for with his effort, his strength, his mind, his body.

Destroyed at the "whim of some men who sat and voted  
Who knows by what minds? Who knows whose will had pla  
them in power?—what motive moved them?—what was th  
knowledge?—which one of them, unaided, could bring a chunk  
ore out of the earth? Destroyed at the whim of men whom

Destroyed at the whim of men whom  
had never seen and who had never seen those tiers of metal,  
Destroyed, because they so decided. By what right?

He shook his head. There are things one must not contemplate, he thought. There is an obscenity of evil which contaminates the observer. There is a limit to what it is proper for a man to see. He must not think of this or look within it, or try to learn the nature of its roots.

Feeling quiet and empty he told himself that he would be all right tomorrow. He would forgive himself the weakness of this night.

and still, he saw feeble snatches of red above black funnels, & coils of steam, webbed diagonals of cranes and bridges

He felt a desolate loneliness, of a kind he had never known before. He thought that Gwen Ives and Mr. Ward could look to him for hope, for relief, for renewal of courage. To whom could he look for it? He, too, needed it, for once. He wished he had a friend who could be permitted to see him suffer, without pretense or protection, on whom he could lean for a moment, just to say, "I'm very tired," and find a moment's rest. Of all the men he knew, was there one he wished he had beside him now? He heard an answer in his mind, immediate and shocking. Francisco d'Ancon.

His chuckle of anger brought him back. The absurdity of

... how should he ever want to do anything again? ...

In the next moment, he was at his desk, bending over it, with his knee on the seat of the chair, with no time to think of sitting down, he was drawing lines, curves, triangles, columns of calculations, indiscriminately on the blueprints, on the desk blotter, on anybody's letters

Oh that! Never mind the looters and their laws! Forget it! Dagny, what do we care! Listen, you know the contraption you called the Garden Truss, that you admired so much? It's not worth a damn. We figured out a truss that will beat anything ever built! Your

will it to you."

## Chapter VIII THE JOHN GALT LINE

The worker smiled, looking at Eddie Willers across the table. "I feel like a fugitive," said Eddie Willers. "I guess you know why I haven't been here for months?" He pointed at the underground cafeteria. "I'm supposed to be a vice-president now. The Vice-President in Charge of Operation. For God's sake, don't take it seriously. I stood it as long as I could, and then I had to escape, if only for one evening. . . . The first time I came down here for dinner, after my alleged promotion, they all stared at me so much, I didn't dare come back. Well, let them stare. You don't. I'm glad that it doesn't make any difference to you. No. I haven't

Now what I mean. She enjoys running that horrible little single-handed and winning

... we've got left—they can barely manage to drag themselves fast enough for old trolley-car rails. Still, there's hope. The United Locomotive Works went bankrupt. That's the best break we've had in the last few weeks because their plant has been bought by Dwight Sanders. He's a brilliant young engineer who's got the only good aircraft plant in the country. He had to sell

aircraft plant to his brother in order to take over United Locomotive. That's on account of the Equalization of Opportunity Bill. Sure it's just a setup between them but can you blame him? Anyway

now  
ing c  
porta  
for the first ten Diesel engines he'll build. When I phoned her that the contract was signed she laughed and said: "You see? Is there ever any reason to be afraid?" She said that because she knows—I've never told her but she knows—that I'm afraid.

Yes I am. I don't know. I wouldn't be afraid if I knew of what I could do something about it. But this. Tell me don't you really despise me for being Operating Vice-President? But don't you see that it's vicious? What honor? I don't know what

it is that I really am—a clown, a ghost, an understudy or just a rotten stooge. When I sit in her office in her chair at her desk I feel worse than that. I feel like a murderer. Sure, I know

that I'm supposed to be a stooge for her—and that would be a honor—but but I feel as if in some horrible way which

can't quite grasp I'm a stooge for Jim Taggart. Why should it be necessary for her to have a stooge? Why does she have to hide? Why

did they throw her out of the building? Do you know that she had to move out into a dinky hole in the back alley across from the

Express and Baggage Entrance? You ought to take a look at some time—that's the office of John Galt, Inc. Yet everybody knows

why do

the

in

or

e

.

when she's all they've got standing between them and destruction.

Why are they torturing her in return for saving their lives?

What's the matter with you? Why do you look at me like this?

Yes I guess you understand. There's something about

all that I can't define and it's something evil. That's why I'm

afraid. I don't think one can get away with it.

I know it's strange but I think they know it too. Jim and his crew

and all of them in the building. There's something guilty

sneaky about the whole place. Guilty and sneaky and dead.

Taggart Transcontinental is now like a man who's lost his soul

who's betrayed his soul. No she doesn't care. Last time

was in New York she came in unexpectedly—I was in my office

in her office—and suddenly the door opened and there she was

came in saying: "Mr. Willers, I'm looking for a job as a stenographer. Would you give me a chance?" I wanted to damn them

but I had to laugh. I was so glad to see her and she was laughing

so happily. She had come straight from the airport—she wore slacks

and a flying jacket—she looked wonderful—she'd got windburnt

it looked like a suntan just as if she'd returned from a vacation.

She made me remain where I was in her chair and she sat on

and talked about the new bridge of the John Galt Line . . .  
So, I never asked her why she chose that name. . . . I don't  
know what it means to her. A sort of challenge, I guess . . . I  
know whom. Oh, it doesn't matter, it doesn't mean a  
thing there isn't any John Galt, but I wish she hadn't used it. I  
like it, do you? . . . You do? You don't sound very happy  
about it."

The windows of the offices of the John Galt Line faced a dark  
Looking up from her desk, Dagny could not see the sky, only  
the wall of a building rising past her range of vision. It was the  
wall of the great skyscraper of Taggart Transcontinental.  
The new headquarters were two rooms on the ground floor of a  
collapsed structure. The structure still stood, but its upper  
floors were boarded off as unsafe for occupancy. Such tenants as it  
retained were half bankrupt, existing, as it did, on the inertia of the  
momentum of the past.

She liked her new place. It saved money. The rooms contained  
superfluous furniture for people. The furniture had come from  
shops. The people were the choice best she could find. On her  
visits to New York, she had no time to notice the room where  
she worked, she noticed only that it served its purpose.  
She did not know what made her stop tonight and look at the thin  
streaks of rain on the glass of the window, at the wall of the build-  
ing across the alley.

It was past midnight. Her small staff had gone. She was due at  
the airport at three A.M., to fly her plane back to Colorado. She had  
left behind her only a few of Eddie's reports to read. With the  
sudden break of the tension of hurrying, she stopped, unable to  
go on. The reports seemed to require an effort beyond her power.  
It was too late to go home and sleep, too early to go to the airport.  
She thought, "You're tired"—and watched her own mood with severe,  
uncompromising detachment, knowing that it would pass.

She had flown to New York unexpectedly, at a moment's notice,  
springing to the controls of her plane within twenty minutes after  
hearing a brief item in a news broadcast. The radio voice had said  
that Dwight Sanders had retired from business, suddenly without  
reason or explanation. She had hurried to New York hoping to  
find him and stop him. But she had felt, while flying across the  
continent, that there would be no trace of him to find.

The spring rain hung motionless in the air beyond the window,  
a thin mist. She sat, looking across at the open cavern of the  
freight and Baggage Entrance of the Taggart Terminal. There  
were naked lights inside, among the steel girders of the ceiling,  
and a few piles of luggage on the worn concrete of the floor. The  
place looked abandoned and dead.

She glanced at a jagged crack on the wall of her office. She heard  
a sound. She knew she was alone in the ruins of a building. It  
seemed as if she were alone in the city. She felt an emotion held  
back for years—a loneliness much beyond this moment, beyond the  
solitude of the room and the wet, glistening emptiness of the street,

pane she could see the whole of the Taggart Building as lines converging abruptly to its distant pinnacle in the sky. She looked up at the dark window of the room that had been her office. She felt as if she were in exile never to return as if she were separated from the building by much more than a sheet of glass a curtain of rain and the span of a few months.

She pressed to the window  
everything she loved  
The only words that  
d

Once when she was sixteen looking at a long stretch of Taggart track at the rails that converged—like the lines of a skyscraper—to a single point in the distance she had told Eddie Walters that she had always felt as if the rails were held in the hand of a man beyond the horizon—not her father or any of the men in office—and some day she would meet him.

She shook her head and turned away from the window.

She went back to her desk. She tried to reach for the report. But suddenly she was slumped across the desk her head on her arm. Don't she thought but she did not move to rise it made no difference there was no one to see her.

This was a longing she had never permitted herself to acknowledge. She faced it now. She thought. If emotion is one's response to the things the world has to offer if she loved the rails the building and more if she loved her love for them—there was still one response the greatest that she had missed. She thought. To find a feeling that would hold as their sum as their full expression the purpose of all the things she loved on earth. To find a consciousness like her own, who would be the meaning of her world as she would be of his. No not Frank and Anconia not Hank Rearden not any man she had ever met admired. A man who existed only in her knowledge of capacity for an emotion she had never felt but would have given her life to experience. She twisted herself in a slow faint movement her breasts pressed to the desk she felt the longing in muscles in the nerves of her body.

Is that what you want? Is it as simple as that?—she thought. knew that it was not simple. There was some unbreakable link between her love for her work and the desire of her body as if gave her the right to the other the right and the meaning as if one were the completion of the other—and the desire would not be satisfied except by a being of equal greatness.

Her face pressed to her arm she moved her head slowly in negation. She would never find it. Her own thought what it could be like was all she would ever have of the what she had wanted. Only the thought of it—and a few rare moments like a few lights reflected from it on her way—to know, to follow to the end . . .

raised her head

to hear him knock. Instead she saw the shadow jerk y as if he were jolted backward then he turned and walked. There was only the outline of his hat brim and shoulders the ground when he stopped. The shadow lay still for a it, wavered and grew longer again as he came back. felt no fear. She sat at her desk motionless watching in wonder. He stopped at the door then backed away from it od somewhere in the middle of the alley then paced rest and stopped again. His shadow swung like an irregular lum across the pavement, describing the course of a sound stile. It was a man fighting himself to enter that door or to

looked on, with peculiar detachment. She had no power to only to observe. She wondered numbly distantly. Who was had he been watching her from somewhere in the darkness? be seen her slumped across her desk, in the lighted naked w? Had he watched her desolate loneliness as she was now ung his? She felt nothing. They were alone in the silence of a why—it seemed to her that he was miles away a reflection of ung without identity a fellow survivor whose problem was stant to her as hers would be to him. He paced moving out t right, coming back again. She sat watching—on the glistening ment of a dark alley—the shadow of an unknown torment. ie shadow moved away once more. She waited. It did not re. Then she leaped to her feet. She had wanted to see the out e of the battle now that he had won it—or lost—she was ik by the sudden urgent need to know his identity and motive ran through the dark anteroom she threw the door open and ad out.

be alley was empty. The pavement went tapering off into the ance, like a band of wet mirror under a few spaced lights. re was no one in sight. She saw the dark hole of a broken dow in an abandoned shop. Beyond it, there were the doors of ew rooming houses. Across the alley streaks of rain glittered her a light that hung over the black gap of an open door leading wa to the underground tunnels of Taggart Transcontinental.

Rearden signed the papers pushed them across the desk and ad away thinking that he would never have to think of them in, wishing he were carried to the time when this moment uld be far behind him.

Paul Larkin reached for the papers hesitantly he looked in 2urgely helpless. "It's only a legal technicality Hank" he d. "You know that I'll always consider these ore mines as yours."



Rearden shook his head slowly it was just a movement of his neck muscles his face looked immovable as if he were speaking to a stranger "No," he said. "Either I own a property or I don't. But but you know that you can trust me. You don't have to worry about your supply of ore. We've made an agreement. You know that you can count on me."

"I don't know it. I hope I can."

"But I've given you my word."

"I have never been at the mercy of anyone's word before."

"Why? why do you say that? We're friends. I'll do anything you wish. You'll get my entire output. The mines are still yours—just as good as yours. You have nothing to fear. I'll—Hank, what's the matter?"

"Don't talk."

"But but what's the matter?"

"I don't like assurances. I don't want any pretense about how safe I am. I'm not. We have made an agreement which I can't enforce. I want you to know that I understand my position fully. If you intend to keep your word, don't talk about it. Just do it."

"Why do you look at me as if it were my fault? You know how badly I feel about it. I bought the mines only because I thought it would help you out—I mean I thought you'd rather sell them to a friend than to some total stranger. It's not my fault. I don't like that miserable Equalization Bill. I don't know who's behind it. I never dreamed they'd pass it. It was such a shock to me when they—"

"Never mind."

"But I only—"

"Why do you insist on talking about it?"

"I—Larkin's voice was pleading. I gave you the best price. Hank. The law said 'reasonable compensation.' My bid was higher than anyone else's."

Rearden looked at the papers still lying across the desk. He thought of the payment these papers gave him for his ore mine. Two-thirds of the sum was money which Larkin had obtained as a loan from the government; the new law made provisions for such loans in order to give a fair opportunity to the new owners who have never had a chance. Two-thirds of the rest was a loan he himself had granted to Larkin as a mortgage he had accepted on his own mines. And the government money he then suddenly the money now given to him as payment for his property where had that come from? Whose work had provided it?

"You don't have to worry, Hank," said Larkin with that comprehensible insistent note of pleading in his voice. "It's a paper formality."

Rearden wondered dimly what it was that Larkin wanted from him. He felt that the man was waiting for something beyond the physical fact of the sale, some words which he, Rearden, was expected to pronounce, some action pertaining to mercy which was expected to grant. Larkin's eyes in this moment of his fortune, had the sickening look of a beggar.

Why should you be angry, Hank? It's only a new form of legal tape. Just a new historical condition. Nobody can help it, if a historical condition. Nobody can be blamed for it. But there's always a way to get along. Look at all the others. They don't mind. They're—"

"They're setting up stooges whom they control, to run the enterprises extorted from them. I—"

"Now why do you want to use such words?"

"I might as well tell you—and I think you know it—that I am not good at games of that kind. I have neither the time nor the stomach to devise some form of blackmail in order to tie you up and own my mines through you. Ownership is a thing I don't care for. And I don't wish to hold it by the grace of your cowardice—by means of a constant struggle to outwit you and keep some threat over your head. I don't do business that way and I don't deal with cowards. The mines are yours. If you wish to give me first call on all the ore produced, you will do so. If you wish to double your share, it's in your power."

Larkin looked hurt. "That's very unfair of you," he said, there was a dry little note of righteous reproach in his voice. "I have never given you cause to distrust me." He picked up the papers with a hasty movement.

Rearden saw the papers disappear into Larkin's inside coat pocket. He saw the flare of the open coat, the wrinkles of a vest pulled tight over flabby bulges and a stain of perspiration in the damp spot of the shirt.

Rearden summoned the picture of a face seen twenty-seven years ago suddenly.

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isn't . . . . .

Then he saw the boy who had been Hank Rearden at eighteen. He saw the tension of the face, the speed of the walk, the drunken exhilaration of the body, drunk on the energy of sleepless nights, a proud lift of the head, the clear, steady, ruthless eyes, the eyes of a man who drove himself without pity toward that which he hated. And he saw what Paul Larkin must have been at that time—a youth with an aged baby's face smiling ingratiatingly, joyfully begging to be spared, pleading with the universe to give him a chance. If someone had shown that youth in the Hank Rearden of that time and told him that this was to be the goal of his steps, the collector of the energy of his aching tendons, what would he have—

It was not a thought, it was like the punch of a fist inside his skull. Then, when he could think again, Rearden knew what the boy he had been would have felt: a desire to step on the obscene

thing which was Larkin and grind every wet bit of it out of existence

He had never experienced an emotion of this kind. It took him a few moments to realize that this was what men called hatred.

He noticed that rising to leave and muttering some sort of good byes, Larkin had a wounded, reproachful, mouth pinched look as if he, Larkin, were the injured party.

When he sold his coal mines to Ken Danagger, who owned the largest coal company in Pennsylvania, Rearden wondered why he felt as if it were almost painless. He felt no hatred. Ken Danagger was a man in his fifties, with a hard, closed face, he had started in life as a miner.

When Rearden handed to him the deed to his new property Danagger said impassively, "I don't believe I've mentioned that any coal you buy from me you'll get it at cost."

Rearden glanced at him astonished. "It's against the law," he said.

"Who's going to find out what sort of cash I hand to you in your own living room?"

"You're talking about a rebate."

"I am."

"That's against two dozen laws. They'll sock you worse than me if they catch you at it."

"Sure. That's your protection—so you won't be left at the mercy of my good will."

Rearden smiled. It was a happy smile, but he closed his eyes under a blow. Then he shook his head. "Thanks," he said. "I'm not one of them. I don't expect anybody to work for me cost."

"I'm not one of them either," said Danagger angrily. "Look here, Rearden, don't you suppose I know what I'm getting, unearned? The money doesn't pay you for it. Not nowadays."

"You didn't volunteer to bid to buy my property. I asked you to buy it. I wish there had been somebody like you in the ore business to take over my mines. There wasn't. If you want to do me a favor, don't offer me rebates. Give me a chance to pay you higher prices higher than anyone else will offer. Sock me anything you want just so I'll be first to get the coal. I'll manage my end of it. O.K. let me have the coal."

"You'll have it."

Rearden wondered for a while, why he heard no word from Wesley Mouch. His calls to Washington remained unanswered. Then he received a letter consisting of a single sentence which informed him that Mr. Mouch was resigning from his employment. Three weeks later, he read in the newspapers that Wesley Mouch had been appointed Assistant Coordinator of the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources.

Don't dwell on any of it—thought Rearden, through the silence of many evenings, fighting the sudden access of that new emotion which he did not want to feel—there is an unspeakable evil in the world, you know it and it's no use dwelling on the detail.

you must work a little harder. Just a little harder Don't let it

The beams and girders of the Rearden Metal bridge were coming out of the rolling mills, and were being shipped to the site of John Galt Lane, where the first shapes of green blue metal, rising into space to span the canyon, glittered in the first rays of spring sun. He had no time for pain, no energy for anger. In a few weeks, it was over; the blinding stabs of hatred ended and did not return.

He was back in confident self-control on the evening when he phoned Eddie Willers "Eddie, I'm in New York, at the Wayne-land. Come in have breakfast with me tomorrow morning. I've got something I'd like to discuss with you."

Eddie Willers went to the apartment - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 15 - 16 - 17 - 18 - 19 - 20 - 21 - 22 - 23 - 24 - 25 - 26 - 27 - 28 - 29 - 30 - 31 - 32 - 33 - 34 - 35 - 36 - 37 - 38 - 39 - 40 - 41 - 42 - 43 - 44 - 45 - 46 - 47 - 48 - 49 - 50 - 51 - 52 - 53 - 54 - 55 - 56 - 57 - 58 - 59 - 60 - 61 - 62 - 63 - 64 - 65 - 66 - 67 - 68 - 69 - 70 - 71 - 72 - 73 - 74 - 75 - 76 - 77 - 78 - 79 - 80 - 81 - 82 - 83 - 84 - 85 - 86 - 87 - 88 - 89 - 90 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94 - 95 - 96 - 97 - 98 - 99 - 100 - 101 - 102 - 103 - 104 - 105 - 106 - 107 - 108 - 109 - 110 - 111 - 112 - 113 - 114 - 115 - 116 - 117 - 118 - 119 - 120 - 121 - 122 - 123 - 124 - 125 - 126 - 127 - 128 - 129 - 130 - 131 - 132 - 133 - 134 - 135 - 136 - 137 - 138 - 139 - 140 - 141 - 142 - 143 - 144 - 145 - 146 - 147 - 148 - 149 - 150 - 151 - 152 - 153 - 154 - 155 - 156 - 157 - 158 - 159 - 160 - 161 - 162 - 163 - 164 - 165 - 166 - 167 - 168 - 169 - 170 - 171 - 172 - 173 - 174 - 175 - 176 - 177 - 178 - 179 - 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He felt as if it had the threat of some malicious unknown. He added facing one of the Bull's victims he felt almost as if he, Eddie Willers, shared the responsibility for it in some terrible way which he could not define.

When he saw Rearden, the feeling vanished. There was no hint of pitying a victim, in Rearden's bearing. Beyond the windows of the hotel room, the spring sunlight of early morning sparkled on the windows of the city, the sky was a very pale blue that seemed to say the offices were still closed, and the city did not look as if it held malice, but as if it were joyously, hopefully ready to swing into action—in the same manner as Rearden. He looked refreshed after an untroubled sleep, he wore a dressing gown, he seemed impatient of the necessity to dress, unwilling to delay the exciting time of his business duties.

"Good morning, Eddie. Sorry if I got you out so early. It's the only time I had. Have to go back to Philadelphia right after breakfast. We can talk while we're eating."

The dressing gown he wore was of dark blue flannel, with the blue initials "H R" on the breast pocket. He looked young, remained at home in this room and in the world.

Eddie watched a waiter wheel the breakfast table into the room with a swift efficiency that made him feel braced. He found himself enjoying the stuff freshness of the white tablecloth and the sunlight sparkling on the silver, on the two bowls of crushed ice holding glasses of orange juice he had not known that such things could give him an invigorating pleasure.

"I didn't want to phone Dagny long distance about this particular matter," said Rearden. "She has enough to do. We can settle it in a few minutes, you and I."

"If I have the authority to do it?"

Rearden smiled. "You have." He leaned forward across the table. "Eddie, what's the financial state of Taggart Transcontinental at the moment? Desperate?"

"Worse than that, Mr. Rearden."

Are you able to meet pay rolls?

"Not quite. We've kept it out of the newspapers but I think everybody knows it. We're in arrears all over the system and Jim is running out of excuses."

Do you know that your first payment for the Rearden Metal rail is due next week?

Yes I know it."

Well let's agree on a moratorium. I'm going to give you an extension—you won't have to pay me anything until six months after the opening of the John Galt Line.

Eddie Willers put down his cup of coffee with a sharp thud. He could not say a word.

Rearden chuckled. "What's the matter? You do have the authority to accept, don't you?"

Mr. Rearden: "I don't know. . . what to say to you."

Why just okay is all that's necessary.

Okay Mr. Rearden. Eddie's voice was barely audible.

I'll draw up the papers and send them to you. You can tell Jim about it and have him sign them."

Yes Mr. Rearden."

"I don't like to deal with Jim. He'd waste two hours trying to make himself believe that he's made me believe that he's done me a favor by accepting."

Eddie sat without moving, looking down at his plate.

"What's the matter?"

Mr. Rearden: "I'd like . . . to say thank you . . . but there isn't any form of it big enough to—"

"Look, Eddie. You've got the makings of a good businessman, so you'd better get a few things straight. There aren't any thank-yous in situations of this kind. I'm not doing it for Taggart Transcontinental. It's a simple practical selfish matter on my part. Why should I collect my money from you now, when it might prove to be the death blow to your company? If your company were a good one I'd collect, and fast. I don't engage in charity, and I don't gamble on incompetents. But you're still the best railroad in the country. When the John Galt Line is completed you'll be the soundest one financially. So I have good reason to wait. Besides, you're in trouble on account of my rail. I intend to see you win."

"I still owe you thanks, Mr. Rearden, for something more greater than charity."

"No. Don't you see? I have just received a great deal of money."

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again

for a

He

horrible about it

"What?"

"What they've done to you—and what you're doing in return mean—" He stopped. "Forgive me, Mr. Rearden. I know this no way to talk business."

Rearden smiled "Thanks, Eddie I know what you mean. But  
it it. To hell with them."

Yes. Only Mr Rearden, may I say something to you? I  
w it's completely improper and I'm not speaking as a vice-  
ident."

Go ahead."

I don't have to tell you what your offer means to Dagny, to  
every decent person on Taggart Transcontinental. You know  
And you know you can count on us. But . . . but I think it's hor-  
le that Jim Taggart should benefit, too—that you should be the  
: to save him and people like him, after they—"

Rearden laughed "Eddie, what do we care about people like him?  
re driving an express, and they're riding on the roof, making a  
of noise about being leaders. Why should we care? We have  
ough power to carry them along—haven't we?"

"It won't stand."

The summer sun made blotches of fire on the windows of the  
? and glittering sparks in the dust of the streets. Columns of  
at shimmered through the air, rising from the roofs to the white  
se of the calendar. The calendar's motor ran on, marking off the  
days of June.

"It won't stand," people said "When they run the first train on  
e John Galt Line, the rail will split. They'll never get to the  
dge. If they do, the bridge will collapse under the engine."

From the slopes of Colorado, freight trains rolled down the  
ack of the . . .

. . . the main  
. . . and the  
. . . went radi-  
. . . industries in

states. No one spoke about them. To the knowledge of the  
able, the tank trains moved as silently as rays and as rays, they  
are noticed only when they became the light of electric lamps,  
be heat of furnaces, the movement of motors; but as such, they  
were not noticed, they were taken for granted.

The Phoenix Durango Railroad was to end operations on July 25.  
"Hank Rearden is a greedy monster," people said "Look at the  
brune he's made. Has he ever given anything in return? Has he  
er shown any sign of social conscience? Money that's all he's  
ther. He'll do anything for money. What does he care if people  
lose their lives when his bridge collapses?"

"The Taggarts have been a band of vultures for generations."  
People said "It's in their blood. Just remember that the founder  
of that family was Nat Taggart, the most notoriously anti-social  
scoundrel that ever lived, who bled the country white to squeeze a  
fortune for himself. You can be sure that a Taggart won't hesitate  
to risk people's lives in order to make a profit. They bought  
inferior rail because it's cheaper than steel—what do they care  
catastrophes and mangled human bodies, after they've  
first?"

People said it. . . the other people said it. They did

why it was being said and heard everywhere. They did not ask or ask for reasons. "Reason," Dr. Pritchett had told them, "is the most naïve of all superstitions."

"The source of public opinion?" said Claude Slagenhop in a radio speech. "There is no source of public opinion. It is spontaneously general. It is a reflex of the collective instinct of the collective mind."

Orren Boyle gave an interview to *Globe*, the news magazine with the largest circulation. The interview was devoted to the subject of the grave social responsibility of metallurgists, stressing the fact that metal performed so many crucial tasks where human lives depended on its quality. "One should not, it seems to me, use human beings as guinea pigs in the launching of a new product," he said. He mentioned no names.

"Why, no. I don't say that that bridge will collapse," said the chief metallurgist of Associated Steel, on a television program. "I don't say it at all. I just say that if I had any children, I would let them ride on the first train that's going to cross that bridge. But it's only a personal preference, nothing more, just because I'm overly fond of children."

"I don't claim that the Rearden-Taggart contraption will collapse," wrote Bertram Scudder in *The Future*. "Maybe it will, maybe it won't. That's not the important issue. The important issue is: what protection does society have against the arrogant selfishness and greed of two unbridled individualists, whose reactions are conspicuously devoid of any public spirited actions? These two, apparently, are willing to stake the lives of their fellow men against their own conceited notions about their powers of judgment against the overwhelming majority opinion of recognized experts. Should society permit it? If that thing does collapse, won't it be too late to take precautionary measures? Won't it be like locking the barn after the horse has been thet?"

... created One  
... it's study of  
... Call Line by government experts before the first train was  
... allowed to run. The petition stated that its signers had no motive  
... than "Eubank"  
... space  
... receive  
... disinterested

No space was given by the newspapers to the progress of the petition. ... about facts"

A few businessmen thought that one should think about the possibility that there might be commercial value in Rearden's

ry undertook a survey of the question. They did not hire metallurgists to examine samples nor engineers to visit the site of construction. They took a public poll. Ten thousand people guaranteed to represent every existing kind of brain, were asked the question "Would you ride on the John Galt Line?" The answer, overwhelmingly, was "No sir reef."

No voices were heard in public in defense of Rearden Metal. And nobody attached significance to the fact that the stock of Taggart Transcontinental was rising on the market very slowly almost invisibly. There were men who watched and played safe. Mr. Lowen bought Taggart stock in the name of his sister. Ben Nealy bought it in the name of a cousin. Paul Larkin bought it under an alias. "I don't believe in raising controversial issues," said one of these men.

"Oh, yes, of course the construction is moving on schedule," said Mrs. Taggart, shrugging, to his Board of Directors. "Oh yes, you may feel full confidence. My dear sister does not happen to be a human being, but just an internal combustion engine, so one must not wonder at her success."

When James Taggart heard a rumor that some bridge girders had split and crashed, killing three workmen, he leaped to his feet and ran to his secretary's office, ordering him to call Colorado. He waved, pressed against the secretary's desk, as if seeking protection. His eyes had the unfocused look of panic. Yet his mouth moved cheerily into almost a smile and he said, "I'd give anything to see my Rearden's face right now." When he heard that the rumor was false, he said, "Thank God!" But his voice had a note of disappointment.

"Oh well!" said Philip Rearden to his friends, hearing the same rumor. "Maybe he can fail too once in a while. Maybe my great power isn't as great as he thinks."

"Darling," said Lillian Rearden to her husband, "I fought for you yesterday at a tea where the women were saying that Dagny Taggart is your mistress. Oh for heaven's sake don't look at me like that! I know it's preposterous and I gave them hell for it. It's just that those silly bitches can't imagine any other reason why a woman would take such a stand against everybody for the sake of your Metal. Of course, I know better than that. I know that the Taggart woman is perfectly sexless and doesn't give a damn about you—and, darling, I know that if you ever had the courage for anything of the sort, which you haven't, you wouldn't go for an adding machine in tailored suits, you'd go for some blond, feminine chorus girl who—oh, but Henry, I'm only joking!—don't look at me like that!"

"Dagny," James Taggart said miserably, "what's going to happen to me? Taggart Transcontinental has become so unpopular!" Dagny laughed in enjoyment of the moment, any moment as if the undercurrent of enjoyment was constant within her and little was needed to tap it. She laughed easily, her mouth relaxed and sweet. Her teeth were very white against her sun-scorched face. Her eyes had the look, acquired in open country, of being set for



great distances. On her last few visits to New York, he had noticed that she looked at him as if she did not see him.

"What are we going to do? The public is so overwhelmingly against us!"

"Jim, do you remember the story they tell about Nat Taggart? He said that he envied only one of his competitors, the one who said 'The public be damned.' He wished he had said it."

In the summer days and in the heavy stillness of the evenings of the city, there were moments when a lonely man or woman—on a park bench, on a street corner, at an open window—would see in a newspaper a brief mention of the progress of the John Galt Line and would look at the city with a sudden stab of hope. They were the very young, who felt that it was the kind of event they longed to see happening in the world—or the very old, who had seen a world in which such events did happen. They did not care about railroads, they knew nothing about business, they knew only that someone was fighting against great odds and winning. They did not admire the fighters' purpose, they believed the voices of public opinion—and yet, when they read that the Line was growing, they felt a moment's sparkle and wondered why it made their own problems seem easier.

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were piling up—for the first train to run on the John Galt Line. Dagny Taggart had announced that the first train would be, as was the custom, but a freight special.

The freight came from farms, from lumber yards, from mines over the country, from distant places whose last means of survival were the new factories of Colorado. No one wrote about the shippers, because they were men who were not disinterested.

The Phoenix  
Dagny sat at her battered desk, against the blotched wall of her office. She said, without moving, "Get out of here."

It was a sentence the man had never heard in the polished offices of railroad executives. He looked bewildered. "I came to see you."

"If you have anything to say to me, start over again."

"What?"

"Don't tell me what you're going to allow me to do."

"Well, I meant we're not going to allow our men to run your train."

"That's different."

"Well, that's what we've decided."

"Who's decided it?"

"The committee. What you're doing is a violation of human

"You can't force men to go out to get killed—when that bridge collapses—just to make money for you."  
"I searched for a sheet of blank paper and handed it to him. 'Write it down in writing' she said, 'and we'll sign a contract to effect.'"

"What contract?"

"That no member of your union will ever be employed to run an engine on the John Galt Line."

"Why wait a minute . . . I haven't said—"

"You don't want to sign such a contract?"

"No I—"

"Why not, since you know that the bridge is going to collapse?"

"I only want—"

"I know what you want. You want a stranglehold on your men by means of the jobs which I give them—and on me, by means of their men. You want me to provide the jobs, and you want to make it impossible for me to have any jobs to provide. Now I'll give you a choice. That train is going to be run. You have no choice."

" . . . to be run  
 . . . them, the  
 . . . Then, if  
 . . . existence,  
 . . . union will  
 . . . that I need

"I need more men than they need me, choose accordingly. If you know that I can run an engine, but they can't build a railroad, choose according to that. Now are you going to forbid your men to run that train?"

"I didn't say we'd forbid it. I haven't said anything about forbidding. But you can't force men to risk their lives on something nobody's ever tried before."

"I'm not going to force anyone to take that run."

"What?"

"Go ahead. Advise them anything you wish. Tell them whatever you like. But leave the choice to them. Don't try to forbid it."

The notice that appeared in every roundhouse of the Taggart system was signed "Edwin Willers, Vice-President in Charge of Operation." It asked engineers, who were willing to drive the first train on the John Galt Line, to inform the office of Mr. Willers, no later than eleven A.M. of July 15.

It was a quarter of eleven, on the morning of the fifteenth when the telephone rang in her office. It was Eddie, calling from high up in the Taggart Building outside her window. "Dagny, I think you'd better come over." His voice sounded queer.

She hurried across the street, then down the marble-floored stairs to the door that still carried the name "Dagny Taggart" on its glass panel. She pulled the door open.

The anteroom of the office was full. Men stood jammed among the desks against the walls. As she entered they took their breath off in sudden silence. She saw the graying heads, the muscular shoulders, she saw the smiling faces of her staff at their desks; the face of Eddie Willers at the end of the room. Everybody knew that nothing had to be said.

Eddie stood by the open door of her office. The crowd parted to let her approach him. He moved his hand, pointing at the room, then at a pile of letters and telegrams.

Dagny, every one of them, he said. Every engineer on Taggart Transcontinental. Those who could came here, some from as far as the Chicago Division. He pointed at the mail. "There's the rest of them. To be exact, there's only three I haven't heard from: one on a vacation in the north woods, one in a hospital and one in jail for reckless driving—of his automobile."

She looked at the men. She saw the suppressed grins on the solemn faces. She inclined her head in acknowledgment. She stood for a moment, head bowed, as if she were accepting a verdict, knowing that the verdict applied to her, to every man in the room and to the world beyond the walls of the building.

"Thank you," she said.

Most of the men had seen her many times. Looking at her, she raised her head, many of them thought—in astonishment as for the first time—that the face of their Operating Vice President was the face of a woman and that it was beautiful.

Someone in the back of the crowd cried suddenly, cheerfully: "To hell with Jim Taggart!"

An explosion answered him. The men laughed, they cheered, they broke into applause. The response was out of all proportion in its sentence. But the sentence had given them the excuse they needed. They seemed to be applauding the speaker in insolent defiance of authority. But everyone in the room knew who it was that they were cheering.

She raised her hand. "We're too early," she said, laughing. "Wait till a week from today. That's when we ought to celebrate. And believe me, we will!"

They drew lots for the run. She picked a folded slip of paper from among a pile containing all their names. The winner was in the room, but he was one of the best men on the system. Logan, engineer of the Taggart Comet on the Nebraska Division.

"Wire Pat and tell him he's been selected," she said to Eddie. "But don't tell him until he's here."

A man stepped forward and said, "I'll take care of it, Miss Taggart."

Rearden was in New York on the day when Dagny telephoned him from her office. "Hank, I'm going to have a press conference tomorrow."

He laughed aloud. "No!"

"Her voice sounded earnest, but, dangerously, a bit too  
"The newspapers have suddenly discovered me and are  
questions I'm going to answer them"  
"ve a good time"  
"Are you going to be in town tomorrow? I'd like to have  
on it."  
"I wouldn't want to miss it."

office of  
rained to  
world the  
audience  
use public figure who made utterances about the public  
in phrases carefully chosen to convey no meaning. It was  
daily job to sling words together in any combination they  
ed, so long as the words did not fall into a sequence saying  
thing specific. They could not understand the interview now

usually tailored, suggesting an air of formal almost military  
manner. She sat straight, and her manner was severely dignified,

broken  
body  
ing against the other. His manner was pleasantly informal,  
a bit too informal  
in the clear monotonous voice of a military report consulting  
papers looking straight at the men. Dagny recited the tech  
giving exact figures on  
bridge the method of  
tone of a banker, she  
ic and named the large  
she said

"All right," said one of the reporters. "Aren't you going to give us a  
message for the public?"

"That was my message."

"But hell—I mean aren't you going to defend yourself?"

"Against what?"

"Don't you want to tell us something to justify your Line?"

"I have."

A man with a mouth shaped as a permanent sneer asked "Well,  
but I want to know as Bertram Scudder stated is what protec-  
tion do we have against your Line being no good?"

"Don't ride on it."

Another asked "Aren't you going to tell us your motive for  
riding that Line?"

"I have told you the profit which I expect to make."

"Oh, Miss Taggart, don't say that!" cried a young boy. He was  
new he was still honest about his job and he felt that he liked  
Dagny Taggart, without knowing why. "That's the wrong thing to  
say. That's what they're all saying about you."

Are they?

I'm sure you didn't mean it the way it sounds and I'm sure you'll want to clarify it

Why yes if you wish me to. The average profit of railroads has been two per cent of the capital invested. An industry that does so much and keeps so little should consider itself immoral. As I have explained the cost of the John Galt Line in relation to the traffic which it will carry makes me expect a profit of not less than fifteen per cent on our investment. Of course any industrial profit above four per cent is considered usury nowadays. I shall nevertheless do my best to make the John Galt Line earn a profit of twenty per cent for me if possible. That was my motive for building the Line. Have I made myself clear now?

The boy was looking at her helplessly. You don't mean to earn a profit for you, Miss Taggart? You mean for the stockholders of course? he prompted hopefully.

Why no. I happen to be one of the largest stockholders of Taggart Transcontinental so my share of the profits will be one of the largest. Now Mr Rearden is in a much more fortunate position because he has no stockholders to share with—or would you rather make your own statement, Mr Rearden?

"Yes, gladly," said Rearden. "Inasmuch as the formula of Rearden Metal is my own personal secret, and in view of the fact that the Metal costs much less to produce than you boys can imagine, I expect to skim the public to the tune of a profit of twenty-five per cent in the next few years."

"What do you mean, skim the public, Mr Rearden?" asked the boy. "If it's true as I've read in your ads that your Metal will last three times longer than any other and at half the price would the public be getting a bargain?"

"Oh, have you noticed that?" said Rearden.

"Do the two of you realize you're talking for publication?" asked the man with the sneer.

"But Mr Hopkins," said Dagny in polite astonishment, "there any reason why we would talk to you if it weren't for publicity?"

Do you want us to quote all the things you said?

"I hope I may trust you to be sure and quote them. Would you oblige me by taking this down verbatim?" She paused to see the pencils ready, then dictated: "Miss Taggart says—quote—I expect to make a pile of money on the John Galt Line. I will have earned. Close quote. Thank you so much."

alt Line  
of Ta  
gart transcontinental in Cheyenne Wyoming at four P.M. on Ju  
twenty second. It will be a freight special consisting of eigh  
cars. It will be driven by an eight thousand horsepower four  
Dwight locomotive—which I'm leasing from Taggart Transco  
ntinental for the occasion. It will run non-stop to Wyatt Junction

Colorado traveling at an average speed of one hundred miles per hour I beg your pardon?" she asked, hearing the long low sound of a whistle.

"What did you say, Miss Taggart?"

"I said, one hundred miles per hour—grades, curves and all."

"But shouldn't you cut the speed below normal rather than

—Miss Taggart, don't you have any consideration whatever for public opinion?"

"Oh yes, I do."

"What?"

"What?"

"What?"

men volunteered to do it. So did the firemen, the brakemen and the conductors. We had to draw lots for every job on the train's crew. The engineer will be Pat Logan of the Taggart Comet, the fireman—Ray McHam. I shall ride in the cab of the engine with him."

"Not really?"

"Please do attend the opening. It's on July twenty-second. The press is most eagerly invited. Contrary to my usual policy, I have become a publicity hound. Really I should like to have spotlights, microphones and television cameras. I suggest that you plant a few cameras around the bridge. The collapse of the bridge would give you some interesting shots."

"Miss Taggart," asked Rearden, "why didn't you mention that I'm going to ride in that engine, too?"

She looked at him across the room and for a moment they were alone, holding each other's glance.

"Yes, of course, Mr. Rearden," she answered.

She did not see him again until they looked at each other across the platform of the Taggart station in Cheyenne on July 22.

She did not look for anyone when she stepped out on the platform. She felt as if her senses had merged so that she could not distinguish the sky, the sun or the sounds of an enormous crowd but—

Yet he

how long

of the job

conscious

—an excellent mechanic, but he was stared at by the faces around him, because he was Hank Rearden of Rearden Steel. High above him, she saw the letters TT on the silver front of the engine. The lines of the engine slanted back, aimed at space.

There was distance and a crowd between them, but his eyes moved to her the moment she came out. They looked at each other and she knew that he felt as she did. This was not to be a solemn venture upon which their future depended, but simply their day of payment. Their work was done. For the moment there was no more. They had earned the present.

Only if one feels immensely important, she had told him, can

one feel truly light. Whatever the trains run would mean to others for the two of them their own persons were this day's sole meaning. Whatever it was that others sought in life their right to what they now felt was all the two of them wished to find. It was as if across the platform they said it to each other.

Then she turned away from him.

She noticed that she too was being stared at that there were people around her that she was laughing and answering questions.

She had not expected such a large crowd. They filled the platform the tracks the square beyond the station. They were on the roof of the boxcars on the sidings at the windows of every house in sight. Something had drawn them here something to the effect which at the last moment, had made James Taggart want to attend the opening of the John Galt Line. She had forbidden it. "If you come Jim," she had said, "I'll have you thrown out of your own Taggart station. This is one event you're not going to see." Then she had chosen Eddie Willers to represent Taggart Transcontinental at the opening.

She looked at the crowd and she felt simultaneously astonished that they should stare at her when this event was so personally her own that no communication about it was possible and in a sense of fitness that they should be here that they should want to see it because the sight of an achievement was the greatest that a human being could offer to others.

She felt no anger toward anyone on earth. The things she had endured had now receded into some outer fog like pain that still existed but that she could not stand. In the fog, this day was as bright as the sun on the alive of the earth. It and she had no one to hate.

Eddie Willers was watching her. He stood on the platform surrounded by Taggart executives division heads civic leaders and the various local officials who had been outargued bribed or threatened to obtain permits to run a train through town zone at a hundred miles an hour. For once for this day and every day his title of Vice President was real to him and he carried it well. But while he spoke to those around him his eyes kept following Dagny through the crowd. She was dressed in blue slacks and a shirt she was unconscious of official duties she had left them to him the train was now her sole concern, as if she were only a member of its crew.

She saw him she approached and she shook his hand her smile was like a summation of all the things they did not have to say. "Well Eddie you're Taggart Transcontinental now."

"Yes," he said solemnly, his voice low. There were reporters asking questions and they dragged her away from him. They were asking him questions too. "Mr Willers what is the policy of Taggart Transcontinental in regard to this line?" "So Taggart Transcontinental is just a disinterested observer?" "Mr Willers?" He answered as best he could. He was looking at

run on a Diesel engine. But what he was seeing was the sun clearing of the woods and a twelve-year-old girl telling that he would help her run the railroad some day. He watched from a distance while the train's crew was lined up in front of the engine, to face a firing squad of cameras. Dagny Rearden were smiling as if posing for snapshots of a summer vacation. Pat Logan, the engineer, a short, sinewy man with gray hair and a contemptuously inscrutable face, posed in a manner amused indifference. Ray McKim, the fireman, a husky young man, grinned with an air of embarrassment and superiority toward the cameras. A photographer said, laughing, "Can't you people be a little bit more solemn? I know that's what the editor wants." Dagny and Rearden were answering questions for the press. There was no mockery in their answers now, no bitterness. They were enjoying it. They spoke as if the questions were asked in good faith. Irresistibly, at some point which no one noticed, this came true.

"What do you expect to happen on this run?" a reporter asked one of the brakemen. "Do you think you'll get there?"

"I think we'll get there," said the brakeman, "and so do you, brother."

"Mr. Logan, do you have any children? Did you take out any life insurance? I'm just thinking of the bridge you know."

"Don't cross that bridge till I come to it," Pat Logan answered contemptuously.

"Mr. Rearden, how do you know that your rail will hold?"

"The man who taught people to make a printing press," said Rearden, "how did he know it?"

"Tell me, Miss Taggart, what's going to support a seven-thousand-ton train on a three-thousand-ton bridge?"

"My judgment," she answered.

The men of the press who despised their own profession, did not know why they were enjoying it today. One of them, a young man with years of notorious success behind him and a cynical look of twice his age, said suddenly, "I know what I'd like to be. I wish I could be a man who covers *news*."

The hands of the clock on the station building stood at 3:45. The crew started off toward the caboose at the distant end of the train. The movement and noise of the crowd were subsiding. Without conscious intention, people were beginning to stand still.

The dispatcher had received word from every local operator along the line of rail that wound through the mountains to the Wyatt oil fields three hundred miles away. He came out of the main building and, looking at Dagny, gave the signal for clearing ahead. Standing by the engine, Dagny raised her hand, repeating his gesture in sign of an order received and understood.

The long line of boxcars stretched off into the distance in spaced, rectangular links, like a spinal cord. When the conductor's arm swept through the air, far at the end she moved her arm in answering signal.



Rearden Logan and McKim stood silently, as if at attention, letting her be first to get aboard. As she started up the rungs on the side of the engine a reporter thought of a question he had not asked.

Miss Taggart he called after her, 'who is John Galt?'

She turned hanging onto a metal bar with one hand suspended for an instant above the heads of the crowd.

'We are!' she answered.

Logan followed her into the cab then McKim. Rearden went last then the door of the engine was shut with the tight finality of sealed metal.

The lights hanging on a signal bridge against the sky were green. There were green lights between the tracks low over the ground dropping off into the distance where the rails turned and a green light stood at the curve against leaves of a summer green that looked as if they too were lights.

Two men held a white silk ribbon stretched across the track in front of the engine. They were the superintendent of the Colorado Division and Nealy's chief engineer who had remained on the job. Eddie Willers was to cut the ribbon they held and thus to open the new line.

The photographers posed him carefully scissors in hand he back to the engine. He would repeat the ceremony two or three times they explained to give them a choice of shots they had a fresh lot of film.

to comply, then stopped  
be a phony"

"of a vice president  
back—way back Tak-

one shot when I cut it then get out of the way fast"

They obeyed, moving hastily farther down the track. There was only one minute left. Eddie turned his back to the cameras and stood between the rails facing the engine. He held the scissors ready over the white ribbon. He took his hat off and tossed it aside. He was looking up at the engine. A faint wind stirred his blond hair. The engine was a great silver shield bearing the emblem of Nat Taggart.

Eddie Willers raised his hand as the hand of the station clock reached the instant of four.

"Open her up, Pat!" he called.

In the moment when the engine started forward he cut the white ribbon and leaped out of the way.

From the side track he saw the window of the cab go by and Dagny waving to him in an answering salute. Then the engine was gone and he stood looking across at the crowded platform that kept appearing and vanishing as the freight cars clicked past him.

The green blue rails ran to meet them like two jets shot out at a single point beyond the curve of the earth. The cross-ties melted as they approached into a smooth stream rolling down under the wheels. A blurred streak clung to the side of the engine low over the ground. Trees and telegraph poles sprang into sight abruptly.

went by as if jerked back. The green plains stretched past, in a  
rely flow. At the edge of the sky, a long wave of mountains  
rised the movement and seemed to follow the train.  
It felt no wheels under the floor. The motion was a smooth  
flow on a sustained impulse, as if the engine hung above the rails,  
as a current. She felt no speed. It seemed strange that the green  
of the signals kept coming at them and past, every few sec-  
s. She knew that the signal lights were spaced two miles apart.  
The needle on the speedometer in front of Pat Logan stood at  
hundred.

He sat in the fireman's chair and glanced across at Logan once  
while. He sat slumped forward a little, relaxed, one hand rest-  
lightly on the throttle as if by chance, but his eyes were  
set on the track ahead. He had the ease of an expert, so com-  
fort that it seemed casual, but it was the ease of a tremendous  
concentration, the concentration on one's task that has the ruthlessness  
of an absolute. Ray McKim sat on a bench behind them. Rear-  
er stood in the middle of the cab.

He stood hands in pockets, feet apart, braced against the mo-  
tion, looking ahead. There was nothing he could now care to see  
the side of the track—he was looking at the rail.

Ownership—she thought, glancing back at him—weren't there  
one who knew nothing of its nature and doubted its reality? No,  
it was not made of papers, seals, grants and permissions. There  
was—in his eyes.

The sound filling the cab seemed part of the space they were  
moving. It held the low drone of the motors—the sharper clicking  
of the many parts that rang in varied cries of metal—and the  
high thin chimes of trembling glass panes.

Things streaked past—a water tank, a tree, a shanty, a grain silo.  
They had a windshield wiper motion. They were rising, describing  
a curve and dropping back. The telegraph wires ran a race with  
the train, rising and falling from pole to pole in an even rhythm,  
like the cardiograph record of a steady heartbeat written across  
the sky.

She looked ahead, at the haze that melted rail and distance—a haze  
that could not . . .

border . . .  
the engine . . .  
the . . .  
the glass shield would be first to smash against  
it. She smiled, grasping the answer. It was the security of being  
known, with full sight and full knowledge of one's course—not the  
blind sense of being pulled into the unknown by some unknown  
power ahead. It was the greatest sensation of existence: not to  
trust, but to know.

The glass sheets of the cab's windows made the spread of  
fields seem vaster. The earth looked as open to movement as it  
to sight. Yet nothing was distant and nothing was out of reach.  
She had barely grasped the sparkle of a lake ahead—and in  
an instant she was beside it, then past.

It was a strange foreshortening between sight

thought between wish and full sharply in her mind after a sta First the vision—then the phy thought—then the purposeful motion down the straight line single track to a chosen goal Could one have any meaning without the other? Wasn't it evil to wish without moving—or to move without aim? Whose malevolence was it that crept through the world struggling to break the two apart and set them against each other?

She shook her head She did not want to think or to wonder why the world behind her was as it was She did not care She was flying away from it at the rate of a hundred miles an hour She leaned to the open window by her side and felt the wind of the speed blowing her hair off her forehead She lay back conscious of nothing but the pleasure it gave her

Yet her mind kept racing Broken bits of thought flew past her attention like the telegraph poles by the track Physical pleasure—she thought This is a train made of steel running on rails of Rearden Metal moved by the energy of burning oil and electric generators it's a physical sensation of physical movement through space but is that the cause and the meaning of what I now feel? Do they call it a low animal joy—the feeling that I would not care if the rail did break to bits under us now—it won't—but I wouldn't care because I have experience of this? A low physical material degrading pleasure of the body

She smiled her eyes closed the wind streaming through her hair

She opened her eyes and saw that Rearden stood looking down at her It was the same glance with which he had looked at the rail She felt her power of volition knocked out by some single, dull blow that made her unable to move She held his eyes, lying back in her chair the wind pressing the thin cloth of her shirt to her body

He looked away and she turned again to the sight of the earth tearing open before them

She did not want to think but the sound of thought went on like the drone of the motors under the sounds of the engine She looked at the cab around her The fine steel mesh of the ceiling she thought, and the row of rivets in the corner holding sheets of steel sealed together—who made them? The brute force of men's muscles? Who made it possible for four dials and three levers in front of Pat Logan to hold the incredible power of the sixteen motors behind them and deliver it to the effortless control of one man's hand?

These things and the capacity from which they came—was this the pursuit men regarded as evil? Was this what they called an ignoble concern with the physical world? Was this the state of being enslaved by matter? Was this the surrender of man's spirit to his body?

She shook her head as if she wished she could toss the subject out of the window and let it get shattered somewhere along the

She looked at the sun on the summer fields. She did not think because these questions were only details of a truth she knew and had always known. Let them go past like the telegraph poles. The thing she knew was like the wires flying above an unbroken line. The words for it and for this journey and for feeling and for the whole of man's earth were. It's so simple so right!

She looked out at the country. She had been aware for some time of the human figures that flashed with an odd regularity at the side of the track. But they went by so fast that she could not grasp their meaning until like the squares of a movie film brief flashes blended into a whole and she understood it. She had had the track guarded since its completion but she had not hired the man chain she saw strung out along the right-of-way. A solitary man stood at every mile post. Some were young schoolboys, others so old that the silhouettes of their bodies looked bent against the sky. All of them were armed with anything they had found, from costly rifles to ancient muskets. All of them wore railroad uniforms. They were the sons of Taggart employees, and old railroad men who had retired after a full lifetime of Taggart service. They came unsummoned to guard this train. As the engine went by, every man in his turn stood erect, at attention, and raised his gun in a military salute.

When she grasped it, she burst out laughing suddenly with the brightness of a cry. She laughed shaking like a child. It sounded like sobbing of deliverance. Pat Logan nodded to her with a faint smile. He had noted the guard of honor long ago. She learned from the open window and her arm swept in wide curves of triumph, waving to the men by the track.

On the crest of a distant hill she saw a crowd of people their arms swinging against the sky. The gray houses of a village were huddled through a valley below as if dropped there once and forgotten. The roof lines slanted sagging and the years had washed away the color of the walls. Perhaps generations had lived there with nothing to mark the passage of their days but the movement of the sun from east to west. Now these men had climbed the hill to see a silver-headed comet cut through their plains like the tail of a bugle through a long weight of silence.

The houses began to come more frequently closer to the track. She saw people at the windows on the porches on distant roofs. She saw crowds blocking the roads at grade crossings. The roads were sweeping past like the spokes of a fan and she could not distinguish human figures only their arms greeting the train like inches waving in the wind of its speed. They stood under the bright red lights of warning signals, under the signs saying "Look. Listen."

The station past which they flew as they went through a town a hundred miles an hour was a swaying sculpture of people on a platform to roof. She caught the flicker of waving arms of a tossed in the air of something flung against the side of the train, which was a bunch of flowers.

As the miles clicked past them, the towns went by, with the stations at which they did not stop, with the crowds of people who had come only to see, to cheer and to hope. She saw garlands of flowers under the sooted eaves of old station buildings, and bunches of red white-and blue on the time-eaten walls. It was like the pictures she had seen—and craved—in schoolbook histories of railroads from the era when people gathered to greet the first of a train. It was like the age when Nat Taggart moved across the country and the stops along his way were marked by an eager for the sight of achievement. That age, she had thought, was gone, generations had passed, with no event to greet arrival with nothing to see but the cracks lengthening year by year in the walls built by Nat Taggart. Yet men came again, as they had come in his time, drawn by the same response.

She glanced at Rearden. He stood against the wall, unworried by the crowds indifferent to admiration. He was watching the performance of track and train with an expert's intensity of professional interest, his bearing suggested that he would kick aside any thought such as "They like it," when the thought ringing in his mind was "It works!"

His tall figure in the single gray of slacks and shirt looked as his body were stripped for action. The slacks stressed the lines of his legs, the light, firm posture of standing without effort or being ready to swing forward at an instant's notice; the sleeves stressed the gaunt strength of his arms; the open shirt showed the light skin of his chest.

She turned away, realizing suddenly that she had been glanced back at him too often. But this day had no ties to past or future—her thoughts were cut off from implications—she saw no further meaning, only the immediate intensity of the feeling that she was imprisoned with him sealed together in the same cube of air, the closeness of his presence underscoring her awareness of this and as his rails underscored the flight of the train.

She turned deliberately and glanced back. He was looking at her. He did not turn away but held her glance, coldly and without intention. She smiled defiantly, not letting herself know the meaning of her smile knowing only that it was the sharpest blow she could strike at his inflexible face. She felt a sudden desire to him trembling, to tear a cry out of him. She turned her head away slowly, feeling a reckless amusement, wondering why she found it difficult to breathe.

She sat leaning back in her chair, looking ahead, knowing that he was as aware of her as she was of him. She found pleasure in the special self-consciousness it gave her. When she crossed her legs, when she leaned on her arm against the window sill when she brushed her hair off her forehead—every movement of her body was underscored by a feeling the unadmitted words for which were. It he seeing it?

The towns had been left behind. The track was rising through a country growing more grudgingly reluctant to permit approach. The rails kept vanishing behind curves, and the ridges of hills

ing closer as if the plains were being folded into pleats. The stone shelves of Colorado were advancing to the edge of the sky—and the distant reaches of the sky were shrinking into waves of blue mountains.

Far ahead they saw a mist of smoke over factory chimneys—the web of a power station and the lone needle of a steel derrick. They were approaching Denver.

He glanced at Pat Logan. He was leaning forward a little, his hand on the seat. She saw a slight tightening in the fingers of his hand and his eyes. He knew, as she did, the danger of crossing a city in speed they were traveling.

... of sound, the beating of wheels against the glass panes of a car, and the screams of cheering from a mass that swayed like liquid in the darkness among steel columns—they flew toward a glowing arch and the green lights hanging in the open sky beyond, green lights that were like the doorknobs of space, throwing their doors open before them. Then, vanishing behind them, they entered the streets clotted with traffic, the open windows bulging with human figures, the screaming sirens and—from the top of a distant skyscraper—a cloud of paper snowflakes shimmering on the air, flung by someone who saw the passage of a silver bullet across a city stopped still to watch it.

Then they were out again, on a rocky grade—and with shocking suddenness the car had

... aught with visited them to

... circles of rail became cooling circles among walls that adjoined to grind them off their sides. For the track cut through at times and the mountains parted facing open like two windows at the top of the rail—one a long green, made of vertical needles, with whole trees serving as the pile of a wild carpet of other reddish-brown, side of naked rock.

She looked down through the open window and saw the silver line of the engine hanging over empty space. For below the thin lead of a stream were two long logs to hold up the car and the wheels had dropped to the water were the stream a river of fire. She saw the engines and the cars and the tracks along the road drop and rise as if on a roller coaster, the cars and the tracks rising and falling like a roller coaster.

A wall of rock shot upward in their path filling the windshed, darkening the cab so close that it seemed as if the remnant of time could not let them escape it. But she heard the screech of wheels on curve the light came bursting back—and she saw an open stretch of rail on a narrow shelf. The shelf ended in space. The nose of the engine was aimed straight at the sky. There was nothing to stop them but two strips of green blue metal strung in a curve along the shelf.

To take the pounding violence of sixteen motors she thought, the thrust of seven thousand tons of steel and freight, to withstand it, grip it and swing it around a curve was the impossible feat performed by two strips of metal no wider than her arm. What made it possible? What power had given to an unseen arrangement of molecules the power on which their lives depended and the lives of all the men who waited for the eighty boxcars? She saw a man's face and hands in the glow of a laboratory oven over the white liquid of a sample of metal.

She felt the sweep of an emotion which she could not contain as of something bursting upward. She turned to the door of the motor units she threw it open to a screaming jet of sound and escaped into the pounding of the engine's heart.

For a moment it was as if she were reduced to a single sense the sense of hearing and what remained of her hearing was only a long rising falling rising scream. She stood in a swaying sealed chamber of metal looking at the giant generators. She had wanted to see them because the sense of triumph within her was bound to them to her love for them to the reason of the life work she had chosen. In the abnormal clarity of a violent emotion, she felt as if she were about to grasp something she had never known and had to know. She laughed aloud but heard no sound of it nothing could be heard through the continuous explosion. "The John Galsworthy Line!" she shouted for the amusement of feeling her voice sweep away from her lips.

She moved slowly along the length of the motor units, down a narrow passage between the engines and the wall. She felt the unmodesty of an intruder as if she had slipped inside a living creature under its silver skin and were watching its life beating in great metal cylinders in twisted coils in sealed tubes in the convulsive whirl of blades in wire cages. The enormous complexity of the shape above her was drained by invisible channels and the violence raging within it was led to fragile needles on glass dials in green and red beads winking on panels to tall thin cabinets stenciled High Voltage.

Why had she always felt that joyous sense of confidence while looking at machines?—she thought. In these giant shapes two aspects pertaining to the inhuman were radiantly absent the causeless and the purposeless. Every part of the motors was an embodied answer to "Why?" and "What for?"—like the steps of a life-course chosen by the sort of mind she worshipped. The motors were a moral code cast in steel.

They are alive she thought because they are the physical shape

control Their soul is in every man who has the capacity  
of this achievement Should the soul vanish from the earth,

shivering  
light and

that she  
did to laugh to kneel or to lift her arms wishing she were  
to release the thing she felt, knowing that it had no form of  
vision.

She stopped She saw Rearden standing by the steps of the door  
of his cab He was looking at her as if he knew why she had es-  
caped and what she felt. They stood still their bodies becoming a  
unit that met across a narrow passage The beating within her  
came one with the beating of the motors—and she felt as if both  
came from him, the pounding rhythm wiped out her will They  
went back to the cab, silently, knowing that there had been a  
meeting which was not to be mentioned between them.

The cliffs ahead were a bright, liquid gold Strips of shadow were  
flashing in the valleys below The sun was descending to the  
west They were going west and up toward the sun  
The sky had deepened to the greenish blue of the rails when they  
stopped.

his new  
Wyatt  
roof  
In the  
ung the

At that distance a rocket shot out from among the buildings  
high above the town and broke as a fountain of gold stars  
against the darkening sky Men whom she could not see were  
along the streak of the train on the side of the mountain and  
were sending a salute a lonely plume of fire in the dusk The  
symbol of celebration or of a call for help

Beyond the next turn in a sudden view of distance she saw two  
flashes of electric light, white and red low in the sky They were  
two airplanes—she saw the cones of metal girders supporting them  
and in the moment when she knew that they were the derricks  
of Wyatt Oil she saw that they were sweeping downward that  
they were tearing apart—and at  
a dark crack of



They were flying down, she forgot the careful grading, the curves of the gradual descent, she felt as if the train were plunging downward, head first, she watched the bridge growing to them—a small, square tunnel of metal lace work, a few beams criss-crossed through the air, green blue and glowing struck by a long ray of sunset light from some crack in the barrier of mountains. There were people by the bridge the dark splash of a crowd, they rolled off the edge of her consciousness. She heard the rumbling accelerating sound of the wheels—and some theme of music heard to the rhythm of wheels, kept tugging at her mind, grew louder—it burst suddenly within the cab, but she knew that it was only in her mind the Fifth Concerto by Richard Halley—did he write it for this? had he known a feeling such as this?—they were going faster, they had left the ground, she thought flung off by the mountains as by a springboard, they were sailing through space—it's not a fair test, she thought, we're going to touch that bridge—she saw Rearden's face above her, she held his eyes and he held hers. . . . on the air under . . . heard a drum roll . . . smearing across . . . run along the pier, . . .

Suddenly clear, the deep of their downward plunge was taking them up a hill, the derricks of Wyatt Oil were reeling before them—Pat Logan turned, glancing up at Rearden with the faintness of a smile—and Rearden said, "That's that."

The sign on the edge of a roof read Wyatt Junction. She started feeling that there was something odd about it, until she grasped what it was—the sign did not move. The sharpest jolt of the journey was the realization that the engine stood still.

She heard voices somewhere, she looked down and saw that there were people on the platform. Then the door of the cab swung open, she knew that she had to be first to descend and she stepped to the edge. For the flash of an instant, she felt the slenderness of her own body, the lightness of standing full figure in a current of open air. She gripped the metal bars and started down the ladder. She was halfway down when she felt the palms of a man's hands slam tight against her ribs and waistline. She was torn by the steps, swung through the air and deposited on the ground. She could not believe that the young boy laughing in her face was Ellis Wyatt. The tense, scornful face she remembered now by the purity, the eagerness, the joyous benevolence of a child in that kind of world for which he had been intended.

She was leaning against his shoulder, feeling unsteady on that motionless ground, with his arm about her, she was laughing as if she was listening to the things he said, she was answering, "But didn't you know we would?"

In a moment, she saw the faces around them. They were the bondholders of the John Galt Line—the men who were Nielsen Motors, Hammond Cars, Stockton Foundry and all the other. She shook their hands, and there were no speeches, she stood again

Wyatt, sagging a little, brushing her hair away from her eyes, and smudges of soot on her forehead. She shook the hands of men of the train's crew, without words, with the seal of the iron on their faces. There were flash bulbs exploding around her, and men waving to them from the riggings of the oil wells on the slopes of the mountains. Above her head, above the heads of the crowd, the letters "T" on a silver shield were hit by the ray of a sinking sun.

Ellis Wyatt had taken charge. He was leading her somewhere, the sweep of his arm cutting a path for them through the crowd. One of the men with the cameras broke through to her side. "Taggart," he called, "will you give us a message for the rest?" Ellis Wyatt pointed at the long string of freight cars that has

when she was sitting in the back seat of an open car, driving up curves of a mountain road. The man beside her was Rearden, never was Ellis Wyatt.

They stopped at a house that stood on the edge of a cliff, with no habitation anywhere in sight, with the whole of the oil fields laid on the slopes below.

"Why, of course you're staying at my house overnight, both of you," said Ellis Wyatt, as they went in. "Where did you expect to

be?" he laughed. "I don't know. I hadn't thought of it at all."

The nearest town is an hour's drive away. That's where your boys have gone. Your boys at the division point are giving a party in your honor. So is the whole town. But I told Ted Nielsen and the others that we'd have no banquets for you and no oratory. Would you'd like it?"

"God, no!" she said. "Thanks, Ellis."

It was dark when they sat at the dinner table in a room that had no windows and a few pieces of costly furniture. The dinner was set by a silent figure in a white jacket, the only other inhabitant of the house, an elderly Indian with a stony face and a courteous manner. A few points of fire were scattered through the room, hanging over and out beyond the windows, the candles on the mantel, the lights on the derricks, and the stars.

"Do you think that you have your hands full now?" Ellis Wyatt said, saying "Just give me a year and I'll give you something to be busy with. Two tank trains a day. Dagny? It's going to be six or six or as many as you wish me to fill. His hand swept over the lights on the mountains. "That? It's nothing compared to what's got coming." He pointed west. "The Buena Esperanza Pass. Mules from here. Everybody's wondering what I'm doing with old shale. How many years ago was it that they gave up trying to

Well, wait till  
the deepest oil ever to  
it, an untapped  
a mud puddle  
build pipe line  
don't be!

introduced myself when I spoke to you at the station. I have even told you my name."

Rearden grinned. "I've guessed it by now."

"I'm sorry I don't like to be careless, but I was too excited."

"What were you excited about?" asked Dagny, her eyes narrowed in mockery.

Wyatt held her glance for a moment; his answer had a tone of solemn intensity strangely conveyed by a smiling voice. "About the most beautiful slap in the face I ever got and deserved."

"Do you mean for our first meeting?"

"I mean for our first meeting."

"Don't. You were right."

"I was. About everything but you, Dagny. To find an exception after years of—Oh, to hell with them! Do you want me to turn on the radio and hear what they're saying about the two of you tonight?"

"No."

"Good. I don't want to hear them. Let them swallow their speeches. They're all climbing on the band wagon now. Here's the band." He glanced at Rearden. "What are you smiling at?"

"I've always been curious to see what you're like."

"I've never had a chance to be what I'm like—except tonight."

"Do you live here alone, like this, miles away from everything?"

Wyatt pointed at the window. "I'm a couple of steps away from everything."

"What about people?"

"I have guest rooms for the kind of people who come to see on business. I want as many miles as possible between myself and all the other kinds." He leaned forward to refill their wine glasses.

"Hank, why don't you move to Colorado? To hell with New York and the Eastern Seaboard! This is the capital of the Renaissance."

"The Second Renaissance—not of oil paintings and cathedrals—"

"of oil derricks, power plants, and motors made of Rearden Metal."

"They had the Stone Age and the Iron Age, and now they're going to call it the Rearden Metal Age—because there's no limit to what your Metal has made possible."

"I'm going to buy a few square miles of Pennsylvania."

Rearden. "The ones around my mills. It would have been cheap to build a branch here, as I wanted, but you know why I refused."

"And to hell with them! I'll beat them anyway. I'm going to expand the mills—and if she can give me three-day freight service to Colorado, I'll give you a race for who's going to be the capital of the Renaissance!"

"Give me a year," said Dagny, "of running trains on the Galt Line, give me time to pull the Taggart system together—"

"I'll give you three-day freight service across the continent on Rearden Metal track from ocean to ocean!"

"Who was it that said he needed a fulcrum?" said Ellis Wyatt.

"Give me an unobstructed right of way, and I'll show them how to move the earth!"

He wondered what it was that she liked about the sound of  
 his laughter. Their voices even her own had a tone she had  
 never heard before. From the table she was aston-  
 ishedly illumined by the  
 violent light  
 of their faces and said

"the world as it seems in be right now"  
he emptied the glass with a single movement  
he heard the crash of the glass against the wall in the same  
ant that she saw a circling current—from the curve of his  
y to the sweep of his arm to the terrible violence of his hand  
flung the glass across the room It was not the conventional  
ture meant as celebration it was the gesture of a rebellious  
er the vicious gesture which is movement substituted for a  
ram of pain  
'Ellis' she whispered "what's the matter?"  
. . . . .  
ie same violent suddenness his  
what frightened her was seeing  
"Never mind We'll try to think

The earth below was streaked with moonlight when Wyatt led me up an outside stairway to the second floor of the house to the en gallery at the doors of the guest rooms. He wished them good night and they heard his steps descending the stairs. The moonlight seemed to drain sound as it drained color. The steps led into a distant past and when they died the silence had the whiteness of a solitude that had lasted for a long time as if no person were left anywhere in reach.

She did not turn to the door of her room. He did not move. At a level of their feet there was nothing but a thin railing and a road of space. Angular tiers descended below with shadows revealing the steel tracery of derricks criss-crossing sharp black lines on patches of glowing rock. A few lights white and red trembled in the clear air, like drops of rain caught on the edges of steel sidings. Far in the distance three small drops were green strung on a line along the Taggart track. Beyond them at the end of the race at the foot of a white curve hung a webbed rectangle which was the bridge.

She felt a rhythm without sound or movement a sense of beating as if the wheels of the John Galt Line were still speeding. Slowly in answer and in resistance to an unspoken summons she turned and looked at him.

The look she saw on his face made her know for the first time that she had known this would be the end of the journey. That look was not as men are taught to represent it. It was not a matter of loose muscles hanging lips and mindless hunger. The lines of his face were pulled tight giving it a peculiar purity, a sharp precision of form making it clean and young. His mouth was taut the lips faintly drawn inward stressing the outline of its shape. Only the eyes were blurred, their lower lids swollen and raised their glare met with that which resembled hatred and pain.

The shock became numbness spreading through her body—she felt a tight pressure in her throat and her stomach—she was conscious of nothing but a silent convulsion that made her unable to breathe. But what she felt, without words for it, was Yes, Hank, yes—now—because it is part of the same battle, in some way that I can't name because it is our being, against their

our great capacity, for which they torture us, the capacity of happiness. Now, like this, without words or questions... because we want it.

It was like an act of hatred, like the cutting blow of a lash encircling her body. She felt his arms around her, she felt her legs pulled forward against him and her chest bent back under the pressure of his, his mouth on hers.

Her hand moved from his shoulders to his waist to his leg releasing the unconfessed desire of her every meeting with him. When she tore her mouth away from him, she was laughing soundlessly, in triumph, as if saying Hank Rearden—the austere, unapproachable Hank Rearden of the monklike office, the business conferences, the harsh bargains—do you remember them now? I'm thinking of it, for the pleasure of knowing that I've brought you to this. He was not smiling. His face was tight, it was the face of an enemy, he jerked her head and caught her mouth again, as he were inflicting a wound.

She felt him trembling and she thought that this was the key of cry she had wanted to tear from him—this surrender through the shreds of his tortured resistance. Yet she knew, at the same time, that the triumph was his, that her laughter was her tribute to him, that her defiance was submission, that the purpose of all her violent strength was only to make his victory the greater—he was holding her body against his, as if stressing his wish to let her know that she was now only a tool for the satisfaction of his desire—and his victory, she knew, was her wish to let him reduce her to that. Whatever I am, she thought, whatever person of person I may hold, the pride of my courage, of my work, of my mind and my freedom—that is what I offer you for the pleasure of your body, that is what I want you to use in your service—that you want it to serve you is the greatest reward I can have.

There were lights to see with a light that had them. He took her wrist and threw her that he needed a door, watching her extended her arm to the lamp on the table and turned out the light. He approached. He turned the light on again, with a still contemptuous jerk of his wrist. She saw him smile for the first time, a slow, mocking, sensual smile that stressed the purpose of his action.

He was holding her half stretched across the bed, he was tearing her clothes off, while her face was pressed against him, her legs moving down the line of his neck, down his shoulder. She knew that every gesture of her desire for him struck him like a blow, there was some shudder of incredulous anger within him—yet

esture would satisfy his greed for every evidence of her  
stood looking down at her naked body, he leaned over, she  
his voice—it was more a statement of contemptuous triumph  
a question "You want it?" Her answer was more a gasp  
a word, her eyes closed her mouth open "Yes"  
knew that what she felt with the skin of her arms was the  
of his shirt, she knew that the lips she felt on her mouth  
his but in the rest of her there was no distinction between  
ing and her own, as there was no division between body and  
Through all the steps of the years behind them, the steps  
a course chosen in the courage of a single loyalty their  
of existence—chosen in the knowledge that nothing will be  
that one must make one's own desire and every shape of its  
ment—through the steps of shaping metal, rails and motors—  
had moved by the power of the thought that one remakes the  
for one's enjoyment, that man's spirit gives meaning to  
ent matter by molding it to serve one's chosen goal The  
led them to the moment when, in answer to the highest of  
values, in an admiration not to be expressed by any other form  
bute one's spirit makes one's body become the tribute re-  
g it—as proof, as sanction, as reward—into a single sense-  
of such intensity of joy that no other sanction of one's  
see is necessary He heard the moan of her breath, she felt  
udder of his body, in the same instant.

## ter IX THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

oted in the glowing bands on the skin of her arm, spaced like  
eis from her wrist to her shoulder They were strips of sun-  
from the Venetian blinds on the window of an unfamiliar  
She saw a bruise above her elbow, with dark beads that had  
blood. Her arm lay on the blanket that covered her body She  
ware of her legs and hips, but the rest of her body was only  
ie of lightness, as if it were stretched restfully across the air  
face that looked like a cage made of sunrays  
ning to look at him she thought From his aloofness from  
anner of glass-enclosed formality from his pride in never  
made to feel anything—to this to Hank Rearden in bed  
her, after hours of a violence which they could not name  
not in words or in daylight—but which was in their eyes as  
looked at each other which they wanted to name, to stress,  
ow at each other's face  
saw the face of a young girl, her lips suggesting a smile as if  
aural state of relaxation were a state of radiance a lock of  
falling across her cheek to the curve of a naked shoulder,  
yet looking at him as if she were ready to accept anything  
ght wish to say as she had been ready to accept anything he  
rushed to do  
reached over and moved the lock of hair from her cheek

cautiously as if it were fragile. He held it back with his fingertips and looked at her face. Then his fingers closed suddenly in her hair and he raised the lock to his lips. The way he pressed his mouth to it was tenderness, but the way his fingers held it was despair.

He dropped back on the pillow and lay still, his eyes closed. His

.. .

He got up, not looking at her. His face was blank and tired again. He picked up his clothes from the floor and proceeded to dress, standing

her. He acted that she was

the belt of his slacks had the rapid precision of performing a

She lay back on the pillow watching him, enjoying the sight of his figure in motion. She liked the gray slacks and shirt—the expert mechanic of the John Galt Line she thought in the stripes of sunlight and shadow like a convict behind bars. But they were not bars any longer; they were the cracks of a wall which the John Galt Line had broken. The advance notice of what awaited them outside, beyond the Venetian blinds—she thought of the trip back on the new rail with the first train from Wyatt Junction—the trip back to her office in the Taggart Building and to all the things now open for her to win—but she was free to let it wait; she did not want to think of it; she was thinking of the first touch of his mouth to hers—she was free to feel it to hold a moment when nothing else was of any concern—she smiled defiantly at the strips of sky beyond the blinds.

I want you to know this.”

He stood by the bed, dressed, looking down at her. His voice was pronounced so evenly with great clarity and no inflection. She looked up at him obediently. He said:

What I feel for you is contempt. But it's nothing compared to the contempt I feel for myself. I don't love you. I've never loved anyone. I wanted you from the first moment I saw you. I want you as one wants a whore—for the same reason and purpose. I spent two years damning myself because I thought you were above a desire of this kind. You're not. You're as vile an animal as I am.

Can you have you be anything but the bitch you are. All the greatness that I saw in you—I would not take it in exchange for the obscenity of your talent or an animal's sensation of pleasure. We were two great beings, you and I, proud of our strength, weren't we? Well, this is all that's left of us—and I want no self-deception about it.”

He spoke slowly, as if lashing himself with his words. There was no sound of emotion in his voice, only the lifeless, painful effort; it was not the tone of a man's willingness to speak, but a ugly, tortured sound of fury.

"I held it as my honor that I would never need anyone. I need  
It had been my pride that I had always acted on my con-  
vulsions I've given in to a desire which I despise. It is a desire  
it has reduced my mind my will my being my power to exist  
on an abject dependence upon you—not even upon the Dagny Tag-  
gart whom I admired—but upon your body your hands your  
strength and the few seconds of a convulsion of your muscles. I  
had never broken my word. Now I've broken an oath I gave for  
myself."

"My only desire. I'm going to have you—I'd give up everything I  
live for it, the mills the Metal the achievement of my whole life.  
I'm going to have you at the price of more than myself at the  
expense of my self-esteem—and I want you to know it. I want no  
pretense no evasion no silent indulgence with the nature of our  
relations left unnamed. I want no pretense about love value loyalty  
respect. I want no shred of honor left to us to hide behind.  
I've never begged for mercy. I've chosen to do this—and I'll take  
the consequences including the full recognition of my choice  
of depravity—and I accept it as such—and there is no height of  
madness that I wouldn't give up for it. Now if you wish to slap my  
face go ahead. I wish you would."

She had listened sitting up straight, holding the blanket clutched  
to her throat to cover her body. At first, he had seen her eyes  
glowing dark with incredulous shock. Then it seemed to him that  
she was listening with greater attentiveness but seeing more than  
his face. . . . fixed on his. She looked as if  
a revelation that had never com-  
me ray of light were growing  
its reflection on hers as she  
pushing then the wonder—he

her face being smoothed into a strange serenity that seemed  
bright and glittering at once.

When he stopped she burst out laughing.

The shock to him was that he heard no anger in her laughter.  
He released not as  
the discovery that

ate sweep of her  
floor and kicked

"I made. She stood facing him naked. She said:

"I want you, Hank. I'm much more of an animal than you think.  
I wanted you from the first moment I saw you—and the only thing  
I'm ashamed of is that I did not know it. I did not know why for  
so many years the brightest moments I found were the ones in your  
office where I could lift my head to look up at you. I did not  
know the nature of what I felt in your presence nor the reason  
I know it now. That is all I want, Hank. I want you in my life.  
And you are free of me for all the rest of your time. There's noth-



you'll have to pretend—don't think of me, don't feel, don't care. I do not want your mind, your will, your being or your soul, long as it's to me that you will come for that lowest one of your desires. I am an animal who wants nothing but that sensation of pleasure which you despise—but I want it from you. You'd go up any height of virtue for it, while I—I haven't any to give. There's none I seek or wish to reach. I am so low that I would exchange the greatest sight of beauty in the world for the sight of your figure in the cab of a railroad engine. And seeing it, I would not be able to see it indifferently. You don't have to fear that you are now dependent upon me. It's I who will depend on any whim of yours. You'll have me any time you wish, anywhere, on any terms. Did you call it the obscenity of my talent? It's such that it gives you a safer hold on me than on any other property you own. You may dispose of me as you please—I'm not afraid to admit it—I have nothing to protect from you and nothing to reserve. You think that this is a threat to your achievement, but it is not to mine. I will sit at my desk, and work, and when the things around me get too much to bear, I will think that for my reward I will be in your bed this night. Did you call it depravity? I am much more depraved than you are. You hold it as your guilt, and I—as my pride. I'm more proud of it than of anything I've done, more proud than of building the Line. If I'm asked to name my proudest attainment, I will say I have slept with Hank Rearden. I had earned it."

When he threw her down on the bed, their bodies met like two sounds that broke against each other in the air of the room—the sound of his tortured moan and of her laughter.

\*      \*

The rain was invisible in the darkness of the streets but it was like the sparkling fringe of a lampshade under the corner light. Fumbling in his pockets James Taggart discovered that he had lost his handkerchief. He swore half-aloud, with resentful malice, at the loss, the rain and his head cold were someone's personal conspiracy against him.

the  
col

.      .

He realized suddenly that there were no other appointments that he had a long evening ahead and no one to help him kill it. The front pages of the newspapers were screaming of the triumph of the John Galt Line, as the radios had screamed it yesterday and through the night. The name of Taggart Transcontinental stretched in headlines across the continent, like its track, and had smiled in answer to the question at the head of the long list. The Directors spoke about the Exchange, while they conferred with his sister—just in case, they said—and commented that it was fine, it was holeproof, there was no doubt but that they would have to turn the Line over to Taggart Transcontinental.

ght. He could not be alone, not in the next few hours, yet there  
■ nobody to call. He did not want to see people. He kept seeing  
e eyes of the men of the Board when they spoke about his great  
■ a sly, filmy look that held contempt for him and, more  
mflyngly, for themselves.

He walked, head down, a needle of rain pricking the skin of his  
ck once in ■ while. He looked away whenever he passed a news-  
and. The papers seemed to shriek at him the name of the John  
alt Line, and another name which he did not want to hear  
agnar Danneskjold. A ship bound for the People's State of Nor-  
ay with an Emergency Gift cargo of machine tools had been  
used by Ragnar Danneskjold last night. That story disturbed him in  
the personal manner which he could not explain. The feeling  
emed to have some quality in common with the things he felt  
out the John Galt Line.

It's because he had a cold, he thought. He wouldn't feel this way  
he didn't have a cold, a man couldn't be expected to be in top  
form if he had a cold. ■ ■ ■ did they ex-  
the question  
He fumbled

his handkerchief again, cursed and decided that he'd better  
go somewhere to buy some paper tissues.

Across the square of what had once been a busy neighborhood,  
he saw the lighted windows of a dime store still open hopefully  
at this late hour. There's another one that will go out of business  
pretty soon, he thought as he crossed the square. The thought gave  
him pleasure.

There were glaring lights inside a few tired salesgirls among a  
mess of deserted counters and the screaming of a phonograph  
record being played for a lone listless customer in a corner. The  
music swallowed the sharp edges of Taggart's voice. He asked  
for paper tissues in a tone which implied that the salesgirl was  
responsible for his cold. The girl turned to the counter behind  
her but turned back once to glance swiftly at his face. She took a  
packet, but stopped hesitating, studying him with peculiar cu-  
riosity.

"Are you James Taggart?" she asked.

"Yes!" he snapped. "Why?"

"Oh!"

She gasped like a child at a burst of firecrackers. She was looking  
at him with a glance which he had thought to be reserved only for  
movie stars.

"I saw your picture in the paper this morning, Mr. Taggart,"  
she said very rapidly, a faint flush appearing on her face and  
nothing. "It said what a great achievement it was and how it  
helped you who had done it all, only you didn't want it to be!"

"Oh said Taggart He was smiling

"You look just like your picture" she said in immense astonishment and added Imagine you walking in here like this in your son!

Shouldn't I?" His tone was amused

I mean everybody's talking about it, the whole country! you're the man who did it—and here you are! I've never seen an important person before I've never been so close to anything important I mean to any newspaper news"

He had never had the experience of seeing his presence in color to a place he entered the girl looked as if she was not there any longer as if the dime store had become a scene of awe and wonder

"Mr Taggart is it true what they said about you in the paper?

What did they say?

"About your secret"

"What secret?"

"Well they said that when everybody was fighting about the bridge whether it would stand or not you didn't argue with them you just went ahead because you knew it would stand when everybody else was sure of it—so the Line was a Taggart project you were the guiding spirit behind the scenes but you kept it secret because you didn't care whether you got credit for it or not.

He had seen the mimeographed release of his Public Relations Department Yes he said it's true The way she looked at him made him feel as if it were

"It was wonderful of you Mr Taggart"

"Do you always remember what you read in the newspaper so well in such detail?"

Why yes I guess so—all the interesting things The things I like to read about them Nothing big ever happens to me"

She said it gaily without self pity There was a young determined brusqueness in her voice and movements She had a head of dark brown curls wide set eyes a few freckles on the bridge of her upturned nose He thought that one would call her face attractive if one ever noticed it but there was no particular reason to do so It was a common little face except for a look of alertness eager interest a look that expected the world to contain an exciting secret behind every corner

"Mr Taggart how does it feel to be a great man?"

How does it feel to be a little girl?

She laughed Why wonderful

"Then you're better off than I am"

Oh how can you say such a—"

"Maybe you're lucky if you don't have anything to do with big events in the newspapers Big What do you call big anyway?"

"Why important."

"What's important?"

"You're the one who ought to tell me that, Mr Taggart."

out, of all people saying

what you want to know

g has face with a look of  
tern such as no one had ever granted him You're worn out,  
Taggart she said earnestly "Tell them to go to hell."

Whom?"

Whoever's getting you down. It isn't right."

What isn't?"

That you should feel this way You've had a tough time, but  
I've licked them all, so you ought to enjoy yourself now You've  
sed it."

And how do you propose that I enjoy myself?"

Oh, I don't know But I thought you'd be having a celebration  
ght, a party with all the big shots and champagne and things  
es to you like keys to cities a real swank party like that—  
lead of walking around all by yourself, shopping for paper hand  
chefs of all fool things!"

"You give me those handkerchiefs before you forget them alto-  
gether" he said handing her a dime "And as to the swank party,  
it occur to you that I might not want to see anybody tonight?"  
He considered it earnestly "No" she said, "I hadn't thought  
it. But I can see why you wouldn't."

"Why?" It was a question to which he had no answer

"Nobody's really good enough for you, Mr Taggart" she an-  
swered very simply not as flattery but as a matter of fact.

"Is that what you think?"

"I don't think I like people very much, Mr Taggart. Not most  
of them."

"I don't either Not any of them."

"I thought a man like you—you wouldn't know how mean they  
can be and how they try to step on you and ride on your back,  
if you let them I thought the big men in the world could get  
away from them and not have to be flea bait all of the time, but  
maybe I was wrong."

"What do you mean flea bait?"

"Oh, it's just something I tell myself when things get tough—  
that I've got to beat my way out to where I won't feel like I'm flea  
bait all the time by all kinds of lousiness—but maybe it's the  
same anywhere only the fleas get bigger."

"Much bigger."

She remained silent as if considering something "It's funny,"  
she said sadly to some thought of her own.

"What's funny?"

"I read a book once where it said that great men are always  
happy and the greater—the unhappier It didn't make sense to me.  
But maybe it's true."

"It's much truer than you think."

She looked away, her face disturbed

"Why do you worry so much about the great men?" he asked. What are you, a hero worshipper of some kind?"

She turned to look at him and he saw the light of an inner smile while . . . . .

person . . . . .

answer . . . . .

there to look up to!

A screeching sound, neither quite bell nor buzzer, rang out suddenly and went on ringing with nerve grating insistence.

She jerked her head as if awakening at the scream of an alarm clock then sighed "That's closing time, Mr Taggart," she said regretfully.

"Go get your hat—I'll wait for you outside," he said.

She stared at him, as if among all of life's possibilities this was one she had never held as conceivable.

"No kidding?" she whispered.

"No kidding."

She whirled around and ran like a streak to the door of the employees' quarters forgetting her counter, her duties and all feminine concern about never showing eagerness in accepting a man's invitation.

He stood looking after her for a moment his eyes narrowed. He did not name to himself the nature of his own feeling—never to identify his emotions was the only steadfast rule of his life he merely felt it—and this particular feeling was pleasurable, which was the only identification he cared to know. But the feeling was the product of a thought he would not utter. He had often met girls of the lower classes who had put on a brash little act, pretending to look up to him spilling crude flattery for an obvious purpose. He had neither liked nor resented them, he had found a bored amusement in their company and he had granted them the status of his equals in a game he considered natural to both players involved. This girl was different. The unuttered words in his mind were "The damn little fool means it."

That he waited for her impatiently, when he stood in the rain on the sidewalk that she was the one person he needed tonight did not disturb him or strike him as a contradiction. He did not name the nature of his need. The unnamed and the unuttered could not clash into a contradiction.

When she came out he noted the peculiar combination of her shyness and of her head held high. She wore an ugly raincoat, made worse by a gob of cheap jewelry on the lapel and a small hat of plush flowers planted defiantly among her curls. Strangely the lift of her head made the apparel seem attractive. It stressed how well she wore even the things she wore.

"Want to come to my place and have a drink with me?" he asked.

She nodded silently solemnly as if not trusting herself to find the right words of acceptance. Then she said not looking at him, as if stating it to herself, "You didn't want to see anybody tonight."

"If you want to see me  
 pride in anyone's voice

She was silent when she sat beside him in the taxicab. She looked out the skyscrapers they passed. After a while she said "I heard that things like this happened in New York but I never thought they'd happen to me."

"Where do you come from?"

**"Buffalo"**

"Got any family?"

She hesitated "I guess so In Buffalo"

"What do you mean you guess so?"

"I walked out on them."

## HOW

"I thought that if I ever was to amount to anything I had to get away from them clean away"

**"Why? What happened?"**

"Nothing happened And nothing was ever going to happen."  
 "But what I couldn't stand"

"What do you mean?"

"Well they well I guess I ought to tell you the truth Mr Taggart My old mans never been any good and Ma didnt care whether he was or not and I got sick of it always turning out that I was the only one of the seven of us that kept a job and the rest of them always being out of luck one way or another I thought if I didn't get out, it would get me—I'd rot all the way through, like the rest of them So I bought a railroad ticket one day and left. Didn't say good bye They didnt even know I was gone" She gave a soft startled little laugh at a sudden thought. "Mr Taggart" she said "it was a Taggart train."

When did you come here?

"Six months ago"

"And you're all alone?"

"Yes," she said happily.

"What was it you wanted to do?"

"Well, you know—make something of myself get somewhere."

WATER?

"Oh I don't know, but but people do things in the world. I saw pictures of New York and I thought—she pointed at the flat buildings beyond the streaks of rain on the cab window—I thought, somebody built those buildings—he didn't just sit and think that the kitchen was filthy and the roof leaking and the  
Mr Taggart"

Mr Taggart  
right at him—

That's what

Not enough

...on the western side. And the

Not enough to empty the garbage pail And the duty to help them saying

Woman next door saying it was my duty to help them say  
I had to help her if she or her or of any of

"I made no difference what became of me or of her. Of course, I was very happy to see her again. Beyond the bright

44 Because what could anybody do anyway? Beyond the  
 45 bit of the ... that was hurt

This—my meeting you I mean—that's what they couldn't have. That's what I'm not going to share with them. It's mine, not theirs.

"How old are you?" he asked.

"Nineteen."

When he looked at her in the lights of his living room he thought that she'd have a good figure if she'd eat a few meals. She seemed too thin for the height and structure of her bones. She wore a tight shabby little black dress which she had tried to camouflage by the gaudy plastic bracelets tinkling on her wrist. She stood looking in his room as if it were a museum where she must touch nothing and reverently memorize everything.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Cherryl Brooks."

"Well sit down."

He mixed the drinks in silence while she waited obediently sitting on the edge of an armchair. When he handed her a glass she swallowed dutifully a few sips then held the glass clutch in her hand. He knew that she did not taste what she was drinking did not notice it had no time to care.

He took a gulp of his drink and put the glass down with intention. He did not feel like drinking either. He paced the room silently knowing that her eyes followed him enjoying the knowledge enjoying the sense of tremendous significance which his movements his cuff links his shoelaces his lampshades and ashtrays required in that gentle unquestioning glance.

"Mr Taggart what is it that makes you so unhappy?"

"Why should you care whether I am or not?"

"Because—" well if you haven't the right to be happy proud who has?"

"That's what I want to know—who has? He turned to abruptly, the words exploding as if a safety fuse had blown. "Didn't invent iron ore and blast furnaces did he?"

"Who?"

"Rearden. He didn't invent smelting and chemistry and air compression. He couldn't have invented his Metal but for thousands and thousands of other people. His Metal! Why does he think his? Why does he think it's his invention? Everybody uses work of everybody else. Nobody ever invents anything."

She said puzzled. But the iron ore and all those other things were there all the time. Why didn't anybody else make that Metal but Mr Rearden did?

"He didn't do it for any noble purpose. He did it just for own profit. He's never done anything for any other reason."

"What's wrong with that Mr Taggart? Then she laughed so as if at the sudden solution of a riddle. "That's nonsense Taggart. You don't mean it. You know that Mr Rearden earned all his profits and so have you. You're saying those things just to be modest when everybody knows what a great job people have done—you and Mr Rearden and your sister, who is such a wonderful person!"

eah? That's what you think. She's a hard insensitive woman spends her life building tracks and bridges not for any great but only because that's what she enjoys doing. If she enjoys that is there to admire about her doing it? I'm not so sure it was building that Line for all those prosperous industrialists in radio when there are so many poor people in blighted areas need transportation."

But, Mr Taggart it was you who fought to build that Line "Yes because it was my duty—to the company and the stockholders and our employees. But don't expect me to enjoy it. I'm so sure it was great—inventing this complex new Metal when many nations are in need of plain iron—why do you know the People's State of China hasn't even got enough nails to wooden roofs over people's heads?"

But but I don't see that that's your fault."

From her . . . . .

He  
I've  
he  
rid,  
I gape at them at grade crossings—because they can't invent collapsible bridges at a time when the suffering of mankind glows on the spirit."

She was looking at him silently respectfully her joyous eagerness and down . . .

at 2

"Why though, he said his tone even livelier than of a confidence to a pal "You should have seen Orren Boyle yesterday when the first flash came through on the radio from Lyon Junction! He turned green—but I mean green the color of a fish that's been lying around too long. Do you know what he did last night by way of taking the bad news? He red himself a one at the Valhalla Hotel—and you know what that was—and the next day he was still there today drinking himself under the table and the beds with a few choice friends of his and half the female population of upper Amsterdam Avenue!"

"Who is Mr Boyle?" she asked stepped  
"Oh a fat slob that's inclined to overreach himself. A smart guy who gets too smart at times. You should have seen him last night but I got a kick out of that. That—and Dr. Fergusson. That snooty didn't like it a bit, oh no! a bit—the expert in the State Science Institute the servant of the people and the public health vocabulary—but he carried it off very well. I saw him only you could see him squirming in every paragraph in the interview he gave out this week. I saw him in the city gave Reardon the . . . . . That was pretty good."



whos been riding on the gravy train and well considering  
That was better than Bertram Scudder—Mr Scudder couldn't  
think of anything but No comment when his fellow gentlemen of  
the press asked him to voice his sentiments No comment—from  
Bertram Scudder whos never been known to shut his trap from the  
day he was born about anything you ask him or don't ask About  
simian poetry or the state of the ladies rest rooms in the textile  
industry! And Dr Pritchett the old fool is going around saying that  
he knows for certain that Rearden didn't invent that Metal—be-  
cause he was told by an unnamed reliable source that Reard-  
stole the formula from a penniless inventor whom he murdered

He was chuckling happily She was listening as to a lecture on  
higher mathematics grasping nothing not even the style of the  
language a style which made the mystery greater because she was  
certain that it did not mean—coming from him—what it would  
have meant anywhere else

He refilled his glass and drained it but his gaiety vanished  
abruptly He slumped into an armchair facing her looking  
at her from under his bald forehead his eyes blurred

She's coming back tomorrow he said with a sound like  
a chuckle devoid of amusement

"Who?"

My sister My dear sister Oh, she'll think she's great, won't  
she?

You dislike your sister Mr Taggart?" He made the same sound  
its meaning was so eloquent that she needed no other answer  
"Why?" she asked

"Because she thinks she's so good What right has she to think  
it? What right has anybody to think he's good? Nobody's is  
good

"You don't mean it Mr Taggart?"

"I mean, we're only human beings—and what's a human being?  
A weak ugly sinful creature born that way rotten in his bones  
so humility is the one virtue he ought to practice He ought to  
spend his life on his knees begging to be forgiven for his  
existence When a man thinks he's good—that's when he's rotten  
Pride is the worst of all sins no matter what he's done"

But if a man knows that what he's done is good?"

"Then he ought to apologize for it

"To whom?"

"To those who haven't done it."

"I I don't understand

Of course you don't It takes years and years of study in  
higher reaches of the intellect Have you ever heard of *The  
Physical Contradictions of the Universe* by Dr Simon Pritchett  
She shook her head frightened How do you know what's good  
anyway? Who knows what's good? Who can ever know? There  
are no absolutes—as Dr Pritchett has proved irrefutably Nothing  
absolute Everything is a matter of opinion How do you know  
that the bridge hasn't collapsed? You only think it hasn't."

you know that there's any bridge at all? You think that a system of philosophy—such as Dr Pritchett's—is just something remote, impractical? But it isn't. Oh boy how it isn't!"

But, Mr Taggart the Line you built—"

Oh what's that Line anyway? It's only a material achievement that of any importance? Is there any greatness in anything material? Only a low animal can gape at that bridge—when there are many higher things in life. But do the higher things ever get you on? Oh no! Look at people. All that hue and cry and outpages about some trick arrangement of some scraps of matter; they care about any nobler issue? Do they ever give front

notice or appreciate a whether it's true that this depraved world " "I'll tell you. It's the hallmark of virtue. It means that he is a

He saw the puzzled anxious look of her face. "Taggart, you got everything you wanted. Now you have the whole of the country. The newspapers call you the greatest business genius of the age. They say the stock of your company made a fortune for you overnight, you got everything you could ask for—arent you glad of it?"

In the brief space of his answer she felt frightened and a sudden fear within him. He answered "No".

She didn't know why her voice dropped to a whisper "You don't know the bridge had collapsed?"

"I haven't said that," he snapped sharply. Then he shrugged and waved his hand in a gesture of contempt "You don't understand."

"I'm sorry. Oh I know that I have such an awful lot to

I am talking about a hunger for something much beyond that. A hunger that nothing material will ever satisfy."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean

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What's any human achievement anyway? The earth is only an atom whirling in the universe—of what importance is that bridge to the solar system?"

A sudden, happy look of understanding cleared her eyes. "It's not of you, Mr Taggart to think that your own achievement is not good enough for you. I guess no matter how far you've gone you'll go still farther. You're ambitious. That's what I admire. I mean, doing things not stopping and giving up. I understand, Mr Taggart, even if I don't understand all the big thoughts."

"Then I'll tell you

Her glance of admiration had not changed. He walked across the room moving in that glance as in a gentle spotlight. He went to refill his glass. A bar. He caught a glimpse by a sloppy sagging grace the thinning hair

denly that she did not see him at all. What she saw was the figure of a builder with proudly straight shoulders and wind-blown hair. He chuckled aloud, feeling that this was a good joke on himself, feeling dimly a satisfaction that resembled a sense of victory, superiority of having put something over on her.

Sipping his drink, he glanced at the door of his bedroom, thought of the usual ending for an adventure of this kind, thought that it would be easy. The girl was too awed to resist. He saw the reddish-bronze sparkle of her hair—as she sat head down under a light—and a wedge of smooth glowing skin on her shoulder. He looked away. Why bother?—he thought.

The high of desire that he felt was no more than a sense of physical conquest. The sharpest impulse in his mind nagged at him.

ing. The prospect of experiencing pleasure was not worth the effort. He had no desire to experience pleasure.

"It's getting late," he said. "Where do you live? Let me give you another drink and then I'll take you home."

When he said good-bye to her at the door of a miserable rooming house in a slum neighborhood, she hesitated, fighting not with a question which she desperately wished to ask him.

"Will I?" she began and stopped.

What?

No, nothing, nothing!"

He knew that the question was "Will I see you again?" It was his pleasure not to answer, even though he knew that she would.

She glanced up at him once more, as if it were perhaps the last time, then said earnestly, her voice low: "Mr. Taggart, I'm grateful to you because you—I mean any other man I have tried to—I mean that's all he'd want, but you're so much better than that, oh, so much better!"

He leaned closer to her with a faint, interested smile. "You have?" he asked.

She drew back from him in sudden terror at her own words. "I didn't mean it that way!" she gasped. "Oh, God, I wasn't like that!" or— She blushed furiously, whirled around and ran down the hall.

sa  
it  
cheering along the three hundred mile track of the John Galt

When their train reached Philadelphia, Rearden left her without  
word, as if the nights of their return journey deserved no ac-  
station platforms  
went on to New  
of her apartment

and Lagny knew that she had exposed it  
it said nothing when he entered, he looked at her, making his  
There was the  
ad-  
and  
why  
and him, this was her apartment, the one place in the city that  
I have the

was on the John Galt Line, because the schedule I'd planned  
n't be enough for the business that's piled up in just three  
n."

"A great many people wanted to see you today, didn't they?"

"Why, yes."

"They'd have given anything just for a word with you, wouldn't  
n?"

"I . . . I suppose so."

"The reporters kept asking me what you were like. A young  
y from a local sheet kept saying that you were a great woman  
t said he'd be afraid to speak to you if he ever had the chance  
about—

them  
nbling

gth to  
t your

She caught the sinking gasp of her breath she knew his  
a good straight, her arms at her sides, her face austere, as if

unflinching endurance, she stood under the praise as under a lashing of insults

"They kept asking you questions, too, didn't they?" He intently, leaning forward "And they looked at you with admiration. They looked, as if you stood on a mountain peak and they could only take their hats off to you across the great distance. Did they?"

"Yes," she whispered

"They looked as if they knew that one may not approach you, speak in your presence or touch a fold of your dress. They knew and it's true. They looked at you with respect, didn't they? It looked up to you?"

He seized her arm, threw her down on her knees, twisting her body against his legs and bent down to kiss her mouth. She laughed soundlessly, her laughter mocking, but her eyes half-closed, veiled with pleasure.

He moved on, the intensity of the quest for torture became a quality of the quest.

He looked at her as if the question were a sight visualized every detail, a sight he loathed but would not abandon, she felt the contempt in his voice, the hatred, the suffering—and an eagerness that did not pertain to torture, he had asked a question, holding her body tight against him.

She answered evenly, but he saw a dangerous flicker in her eyes as of a warning that she understood him too well. "There was one other, Hank."

"When?"

"When I was seventeen."

"Did it last?"

"For some years."

"Who was he?"

She drew back, lying against his arm, he leaned closer, his trust, she held his eyes. "I won't answer you."

"Did you love him?"

"I won't answer."

"Did you like sleeping with him?"

"Yes!"

The laughter in her eyes made it sound like a slap across the face, the laughter of her knowledge that this was the answer he dreaded and wanted.

She did not answer, she looked at him, her eyes dark and oddly  
liant, and he saw that the shape of her mouth distorted by pain,  
the shape of a mocking smile  
He felt it change to a shape of surrender, under the touch of his  
He held her body as if the violence and the despair of the way  
took her could wipe his unknown rival out of existence out of  
past, and more as if it could transform any part of her even  
rival, into an instrument of his pleasure He knew, by the  
firmness of her movement as her arms seized him, that this was  
way she wanted to be taken.

The silhouette of a conveyor belt moved against the strips of fire  
the sky, raising coal to the top of a distant tower as if an inex-  
haustible number of small black buckets rode out of the earth in a  
diagonal line across the sunset The harsh distant clatter kept  
ing through the rattle of the chains which a young man in blue  
trails was fastening over the machinery, securing it to the flat-  
a board on the siding of the Quinn Ball Bearing Company of  
Connecticut.

Mr Mowen . . . . .  
cross the . . . . .  
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etched o . . . . .  
lying, bl . . . . .  
the air . . . . .  
en, whil . . . . .  
e vital o . . . . .

"Another one?" asked Mr Mowen, jerking his thumb at the  
ant, even though he knew the answer

"Hub?" asked the young man, who had not noticed him standing  
ere

"Another company moving to Colorado?"

"Uh-huh"

"It's the third one from Connecticut in the last two weeks" said  
r Mowen "And when you look at what's happening in New  
york Rhode Island, Massachusetts and all along the Atlantic  
ast . . ." The young man was not looking and did not seem  
listen. "It's like a leaking faucet" said Mr Mowen "and all the  
ter's running out to Colorado All the money" The young man  
ang the chain across and followed it deftly climbing over the big  
ape covered with canvas "You'd think people would have some  
zing for their native state some loyalty But they're run-  
ng away I don't know what's happening to people"

"It's the Bill," said the young man

"What Bill?"

"The Equalization of Opportunity Bill"

"How do you mean?"

"I hear Mr Quinn was making plans a year ago to open a  
ranch in Colorado The Bill knocked that out cold So now I  
sle up his mind to move there lock, stock and barrel"

"I don't see where that makes it right The Bill was

It's a rotten shame—old firms that have been here for generations There ought to be a law

The young man worked swiftly competently as if he enjoyed it Behind him the sky Four of smoke weas  
mast in the reddish glow of the evening

Mr Mowen had lived with every smokestack of that skyline since the days of his father and grandfather He had seen the conveyor belt from his office window for thirty years That the Quinn Ball Bearing Company should vanish from across the street had seemed inconceivable he had known about Quinn's decision and had not believed it or rather he had believed it as he believed any words he heard or spoke as so  
cal reality Now he knew  
bo the siding as if he st l

"It isn't right" he said he was speaking to the skyline at once but the young man above was the only part of it that could hear him "That's not the way it was in my father's time I'm not a bit short—I don't want to fight anybody What's the matter with the world? There was no answer Now you for instance—are they taking you along to Colorado?"

"Me? No—I don't work here I'm just transient labor Just picks up this job helping to lug the stuff out"

"Well where are you going to go when they move away? Haven't any idea"

"What are you going to do if more of them move out?"  
Wait and see

Mr Mowen glanced up dubiously he could not tell whether the answer was intended to apply to him or to the young man But the young man's attention was fixed on his task he was not looking down He moved on to the shrouded shapes on the next flatcar and Mr Mowen followed looking up at him pleading with some thing up in space "I've got rights haven't I? I was born here expected the old companies to be here when I grew up I expected to run the plant like my father did A man is part of his community he's got a right to count on it hasn't he? Something ought to be done about it"

About what?

"Oh I know you think it's great don't you?—that Taggart boom and Rearden Metal and the gold rush to Colorado and the drunken spree out there with Wyatt and his bunch expanding the production like kettles boiling over! Everybody thinks it's great—that's all you hear anywhere you go—people are slap happy making plans like six year-olds on a vacation—you'd think it was national honeymoon of some kind or a permanent Fourth of July!"

The young man said nothing

"Well I don't think so" said Mr Mowen He lowered his voice "The newspapers don't say so either—mind you that—the newspapers aren't saying anything"

Mr Mowen heard no answer only the clanking of the chains

"Why are they all running to Colorado?" he asked. "What have they got down there that we haven't got?"

The young man grinned. "Maybe it's something you've got that they haven't got."

"What?" The young man did not answer. "I don't see it. It's a backward primitive unenlightened place. They don't even have a modern government. It's the worst government in any state. The worst I know of. It does nothing—outside of keeping law courts and a police department. It doesn't do anything for the people. It doesn't help anybody. I don't see why all our best companies want to run here."

The young man glanced down at him but did not answer.

Mr. Mowen sighed. "Things aren't right," he said. "The Equalization of Opportunity Bill was a sound idea. There's got to be a chance for everybody. It's a rotten shame if people like Quinn take unfair advantage of it. Why didn't he let somebody else start manufacturing ball bearings in Colorado?"

I wish the Colorado people would leave us alone. That Stockton Foundry out there is doing no right going into the switch and signal business. That's been my business for years. I have the right of seniority. It isn't fair, it's a dog-eat-dog competition. newcomers shouldn't be allowed to muscle in. Where am I going to sell switches and signals? There were two big railroads out in Colorado. Now the Phoenix and Durango are gone so there's just Taggart Transcontinental left. It isn't fair—their money is running Dan Conway out. There's got to be room for competition.

And I've been waiting six months for an order of steel from Wren Boyle—and now he says he can't promise me anything because Rearden Metal has shot his market to hell. There's a run on that Metal. Boyle has to retrench. It isn't fair—Rearden being allowed to ruin other people's markets that way.

And I want  
"and get it. He  
tes—nobody  
Wyatt and  
just as good  
tal  
last week"  
that's busy!

They're building four new open hearth furnaces and they've got a more coming.

New furnaces, he said, looking off to the south. "Nobody's built a new furnace on the Atlantic Coast for the last five years."

He stood against the sky on the top of a broad motor looking off at the dusk with a faint smile of eagerness and longing as one looks at the distant vision of one's love. "They're busy," he said.

Then his smile vanished abruptly the way he jerked the chain was the first break in the smooth competence of his movements. It looked like a jolt of anger.

Mr. Mowen looked at the skyline at the belts, the wheels, the smoke—the smoke that settled heavily peacefully across the evening air stretching in a long haze all the way to the city of York somewhere beyond the sunset—and he felt reassured.



thought of New York in its ring of sacred fires the ring of smokestacks gas tanks cranes and high tension lines He felt a current of power flowing through every grimy structure of his familiar street he liked the figure of the young man above him there was something reassuring in the way he worked something that blended with the skyline Yet Mr Mowen wondered why he felt that a crack was growing somewhere, eating through the solid, the eternal wall

"Something ought to be done" said Mr Mowen "A friend of mine went out of business last week—the oil business—had a couple of wells down in Oklahoma—couldn't compete with Ellis Wyatt. I isn't fair They ought to leave the little people a chance The ought to place a limit on Wyatt's output He shouldn't be allowed to produce so much that he'll swamp everybody else off the market

I got stuck in New York yesterday, had to leave my car there and come home on a damn commuters local couldn't get any gas for the car they said there's a shortage of oil in the city Things aren't right Something ought to be done about it

Looking at the skyline Mr Mowen wondered what was the nameless threat to it and who was its destroyer

"What do you want to do about it?" asked the young man.

Who me? said Mr Mowen I wouldn't know I'm not a big shot I can't solve national problems I just want to make a living All I know is somebody ought to do something about it Things aren't right Listen—what's your name?"

Owen Kellogg

Listen Kellogg what do you think is going to happen to the world?

You wouldn't care to know

A whistle blew on a distant tower the night shift whistle, and Mr Mowen realized that it was getting late He sighed buttoned his coat turning to go

Well things are being done he said "Steps are being taken Constructive steps The Legislature has passed a Bill giving wide powers to the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources They've appointed a very able man as Top Coordinator Can't I've heard of him before but the newspapers said he's a man to be watched His name is Wesley Mouch

Dagny stood at the window of her living room looking at the city It was late and the lights were like the last sparks left glowing on the black remnants of a bonfire

She felt at peace and she wished she could hold her mind steady to let her own emotions catch up with her to look at every moment of the month that had rushed past her She had had no time to feel that she was back in her own office at Taggart Transcontinental there had been so much to do that she forgot it was a return from exile She had not noticed what Jim had said on her return whether he had said anything There had been only one person whose reaction she had wanted to know she had telephoned Wayne Falkland Hotel but Señor Francisco d'Arconia she v

ad, had gone back to Buenos Aires

She remembered the moment when she signed her name at the bottom of a long legal page, it was the moment that ended the John Galt Line. Now it was the Rio Norte Line of Taggart Transcontinental again—except that the men of the train crews refused to give up its name. She, too, found it hard to give up, she forced herself not to call it "the John Galt" and wondered why that required an effort, and why she felt a faint wrench of sadness.

One evening, on a sudden impulse, she had turned the corner of the Taggart Building, for a last look at the office of John Galt, in the alley, she did not know what she wanted—just to see it, she thought. A plank barrier had been raised along the sidewalk, the old building was being demolished, it had given up, at last. She had climbed over the planks and, by the light of the street lamp that had once thrown a stranger's shadow across the pavement, she had looked in through the window of her former office. Nothing was left of the ground floor, the partitions had been torn down, there were broken pipes hanging from the ceiling and a pile of rubble on the floor. There was nothing to see.

She had asked Rearden whether he had come there one night last spring and stood outside her window, fighting his desire to enter. But she had known, even before he answered, that he had not. She did not tell him why she asked it. She did not know why that memory still disturbed her at times.

Beyond the window of her living room the lighted rectangle of the calendar hung like a small shipping tag in the black sky. It read September 2. She smiled defiantly remembering the race she had run against its changing pages: there were no deadlines now, she thought, no barriers, no threats, no limits.

She heard a key turning in the door of her apartment: this was the sound she had waited for, had wanted to hear tonight.

Rearden came in, as he had come many times using the key she had given him, as sole announcement. He threw his hat and went down on a chair with a gesture that had become familiar, he wore the formal black of dinner clothes.

"Hello," she said.

"I'm still waiting for the evening when I won't find you in," he answered.

"Then you'll have to phone the offices of Taggart Transcontinental."

"Any evening? Nowhere else?"

"Jealous, Hank?"

"No. Curious what it would feel like to be."

He stood looking at her across the room, refusing to let himself approach her, deliberately prolonging the pleasure of knowing that he could do it whenever he wished. She wore the tight gray skirt of an office suit and a blouse of transparent white cloth tailored like a man's shirt, the blouse flared out above her waistline stressing the firm flatness of her hips, against the glow of a lamp behind her, she could see the slender silhouette of her body within the folds of the blouse.

"How was the banquet?" she asked

"Fine I escaped as soon as I could. Why didn't you come?" "You were invited"

"I didn't want to see you in public"

He glanced at her as if stressing that he noted the full content of her answer then the lines of his face moved to the hint of a

What happened?

"Nothing just a lot of speeches"

"Was it an ordeal for you?"

"No Yes in a way I had really wanted to enjoy it

"Shall I get you a drink?"

"Yes will you?"

She turned to go He stopped her grasping her shoulders from behind he bent her head back and kissed her mouth. When he raised his head she pulled it down again with a demanding gesture of ownership as if stressing her right to do it. Then she stepped away from him

Never mind the drink he said "I didn't really want it except for seeing you wait on me

"Well then let me wait on you"

"No

He smiled stretching himself out on the couch his hands cross under his head He felt at home it was the first home he had ever found

"You know the worst part of the banquet was that the only way of every person present was to get it over with" he said. "Why I can't understand why they wanted to do it at all They did have to Certainly not for my sake

She picked up a cigarette box extended it to him then he the flame of a lighter to the tip of his cigarette in the deliberate manner of waiting on him She smiled in answer to his shock then sat down on the arm of a chair across the room

Why did you accept their invitation Hank? she asked "You always refused to join them"

"I didn't want to refuse a peace offer—when I've beaten them and they know it I'll never join them but an invitation to appear as a guest of honor—well I thought they were good losers I thought it was generous of them"

Of them?

"Are you going to say of me?"

"Hank! After all the trouble I've had"

And now I say out I thought that that was only the surface—when I've proved my case when I've proved it so loudly

right their real motive for inviting me was their appreciation of Metal, and—"

He smiled in the brief space of time she knew the sentence that, I would

at what their motive at all  
... something

me, or to save face with the public There was no purpose of kind about it no meaning They didn't really care when they denounced the Metal—and they don't care now They're not really and that I'll drive them all off the market—they don't care enough about that Do you know what that banquet was like? It's as they'd heard that there are values one supposed to honor I thus is what one does to honor them—so they went through motions, like ghosts pulled by some sort of distant echoes in a better age I I couldn't stand it"

He said, her face tight, "And you don't think you're generous?" He glanced up at her, his eyes brightened to a look of amusement. "Why do they make you so angry?"

She said her voice low to hide the sound of tenderness, "You tried to enjoy it . . ."

"It probably serves me right. I shouldn't have expected anything I don't know what it was that I wanted."

"I do." "I've never liked occasions of that sort I don't see why I expected it to be different, this time You know I went there long almost as if the Metal had changed everything even people."

"Oh yes, Hank, I know!" "Well, it was the wrong place to seek anything Do you remember? You said once that celebrations should be only for people who have something to celebrate"

The dot of her lighted cigarette stopped in mid air she sat still she had never spoken to him of that party or of anything related to his home In a moment, she answered quietly "I remember" "I know what you meant I knew it then, too"

He was looking straight at her She lowered her eyes He remained silent, when he spoke again his voice was gay "The one thing about people is not the insults they hand out but the compliments I couldn't bear the kind they spouted tonight particularly when they kept saying how much everybody needs money the city, the country and the whole world, I guess Apparently, my idea of the height of glory is to deal with people who need me. I can't stand people who need me." He glanced at her "Do you need me?"

She answered, her voice earnest, "Desperately"

He laughed. "No Not the way I meant. You didn't say in the way they do"

"How did I say

"Like a trader—who pays for what he wants They say it's  
beggars who use a tin cup as a claim check."

I pay for it Hank?"

"Don't look innocent You know exactly what I mean."

"Yes" she whispered she was smiling.

"Oh to hell with them!" he said happily stretching his leg  
shifting the position of his body on the couch stressing the lux-  
of relaxation I'm no good as a public figure Anyway it does  
matter now We don't have to care what they see or don't see  
They'll leave us alone It's clear track ahead What's the next  
undertaking Mr Vice-President?

A transcontinental track of Rearden Metal?"

"How soon do you want it?"

"Tomorrow morning Three years from now is when I'll  
it"

"Thank you can do it in three years?"

If the John Galt if the Rio Norte Line does as well as  
doing now

"It's going to do better That's only the beginning"

"I'm"

I'm

and

"I

"I

last

own Mill in San Francisco if somebody wants to  
a banquet there

"In three years I'll have mills pouring Rearden Metal in Colo-  
rado in Michigan and in Idaho That's my installment plan."

"Your own mills? Branches?"

"Uh huh"

What about the

We

to

stop things now? Who'll listen to the bidge? There's a lobby  
the better kind of men working in Washington right this minute  
They're going to get the Equalization Bill scrapped at the next  
sign"

I I hope so"

I've had a terrible time these last few weeks getting the  
furnaces started but it's all set now they're being built I  
sit back and take it easy I can sit at my desk rake in the money  
loaf like a bum watch the orders for the Metal pouring in  
play favorites all over the place Say what's the first  
you've got for Philadelphia tomorrow morning?"

"Oh I don't know"

"You don't? What's the use of an Operating Vice President?  
have to be at the mills by seven tomorrow Got anything running  
around six?"

"Five-thirty A.M. is the first one I think."

"Will you wake me up in time to make it or would you rather  
be the train held for me?"

"I'll wake you up."

He sat, watching him as he remained silent. He had looked tired  
when he came — the lines of exhaustion were gone from his face.

"Daggy," he asked suddenly, his tone had changed, there was  
a hidden, earnest note in his voice, "why didn't you want  
to see me in public?"

"I don't want to be part of your official life."

He did not answer; in a moment, he asked casually, "When did  
you take a vacation last?"

"I think it was two no, three years ago."

"What did you do?"

"Went to the Adirondacks for a month. Came back in a week."

"I did that five years ago. Only it was Oregon." He lay flat on

his back, looking at the ceiling. "Daggy, let's take a vacation."

"Let's take my car and drive away for a few weeks any-

where, just drive down the back roads, where no one knows us.

"I'll leave no address. We won't look at a newspaper, we won't

have a phone. We won't be seen."

until

"You can take a few weeks off, can't you?" he said. "Things are  
not going now. It's safe. We won't have another chance in the  
next three years."

"All right, Hank," she said, forcing her voice to sound calmly  
less.

"Will you?"

"When do you want to start?"

"Monday morning."

"All right."

He turned to step away. He seized her wrist, pulled her down  
against his body to lie stretched full length on top of him. He held

her hair  
shoulder  
whispered,

... .. thing her

... .. bright flicker of some particular interest in his eyes, intent

ly mocking. She glanced down. A strap of her slip had broken,

and hung diagonally from her one shoulder to her side. And he

looking at her breast under the transparent film of the blouse

raised her hand to adjust the strap. He slapped her hand down.

He smiled, in understanding in answering mockery. She walked

deliberately across the room and leaned against a table

with him, her hands holding the table's edge, her shoulders thrown

back. It was the contrast he liked—the severity of her clot

and the half naked body, the railroad executive who was a woman he owned

He sat up he sat leaning comfortably across the couch, his legs crossed and stretched forward, his hands in his pockets, looking at her with the glance of a property appraisal

"Did you say you wanted a transcontinental track of Rearden Metal, Mr Vice President?" he asked "What if I don't give it to you? I can choose my customers now and demand any price I please. If this were a year ago, I would have demanded that you sleep with me in exchange"

"I wish you had"

"Would you have done it?"

"Of course"

"As a matter of business? As a sale?"

"If you were the buyer. You would have liked that, wouldn't you?"

"Would you?"

"Yes" she whispered

He approached her, he grasped her shoulders and pressed his mouth to her breast through the thin cloth.

Then, holding her, he looked at her silently for a long moment. "What did you do with that bracelet?" he asked

They had never referred to it, she had to let a moment pass to regain the steadiness of her voice. "I have it," she answered.

"I want you to wear it"

"If anyone guesses, it will be worse for you than for me"

"Wear it"

She brought out the bracelet of Rearden Metal. She extended it to him without a word, looking straight at him, the green blue chain glittering across her palm. Holding her glance, he clasped the bracelet on her wrist. In the moment when the clasp clicked shut under his fingers, she bent her head down to them and kissed his hand.

\* \*

The earth went flowing under the hood of the car. Uncoiling from among the curves of Wisconsin's hills, the highway was the clear evidence of human labor, a precarious bridge stretched across seas of brush, weeds and trees. The sea rolled softly, in sprays of yellow and orange, with a few red jets shooting up on the hill sides, with pools of remnant green in the hollows under a pure blue sky.

She lay against the corner of the side window, her legs stretched forward, she liked the wide, comfortable space of the car's seat and the warmth of the sun on her shoulders, she thought that the countryside was beautiful.

"What I'd like to see," said Rearden, "is a billboard"

She laughed. He had answered her silent thought, "Selling what and to whom? We haven't seen a car or a house for an hour"

"That's what I don't like about it" He bent forward a little, and

ds on the wheel he was frowning "Look at that road"  
The long strip of concrete was bleached to the powdery gray of  
res left on a desert as if sun and snows had eaten away the traces  
lures, oil and carbon, the lustrous polish of motion Green weeds  
from the angular cracks of the concrete No one had used the  
d or repaired it for many years but the cracks were few  
"It's a good road" said Rearden "It was built to last The man  
o built it must have had a good reason for expecting it to  
ry a heavy traffic in the years ahead"

"Yes"  
"I don't like the looks of this"  
"I don't either" Then she smiled "But think how often we've  
red people complain that billboards ruin the appearance of the  
ntryside Well there's the unruined countryside for them to  
ure" She added "They're the people I hate"

He did not want to feel the uneasiness which she felt like a thun  
ck under her enjoyment of this day She had felt that uneasiness  
times in the last three weeks at the sight of the country stream  
past the wedge of the car's hood She smiled it was the hood  
t had been the immovable point in her field of vision while the  
th had gone by it was the hood that had been the center, the  
us the security in a blurred dissolving world the hood  
ore her and Rearden's hands on the wheel by her side she  
led thinking that she was satisfied to let this be the shape of  
world

After the first week of their wandering when they had driven in  
dom at the mercy of unknown crossroads he had said to her  
: morning as they started out "Dagny does resting have to be  
: poseless?" She had laughed answering No What factory do  
: want to see?" He had smiled—at the guilt he did not have to  
ume — the explanations he did not have to give—and he had  
rtered, "It's an abandoned ore mine around Saginaw Bay that  
: heard about They say it's exhausted"

They had driven across Michigan to the ore mine They had  
iked through the ledges of an empty pit with the remnants of a  
ne like a skeleton bending above them against the sky and  
neone's rusted lunchbox clattering away from under their feet  
: had felt a stab of uneasiness sharper than sadness—but  
arden had said cheerfully "Exhausted hell! I'll show them how  
ny tons and dollars I can draw out of this place!" On their way  
k to the car he had said "If I could find the right man I'd  
r that mine for him tomorrow morning and set him up to work"

The next day when they were driving west and south toward the  
ns of Illinois he had said suddenly after a long silence "No  
have to wait till they junk the Bull The man who could work  
a mine wouldn't need me to teach him The man who'd need  
: wouldn't be worth a damn"

They could speak of their work as they always had with full con  
fidence in being understood But they never spoke of each other  
ed as if their passionate intimacy were a nameless physical



not to be identified in the communication between two minds. That night it was as if she lay in the arms of a stranger who let her feel every shudder of sensation that ran through his body but would never permit her to know whether the shocks reached any sensitive tremor within him. She lay naked at his side, but on her wrist there was the bracelet of Rearden Metal.

She knew that he hated the ordeal of signing the "Mr and Mr Smith" on the registers of squalid roadside hotels. There were evenings when she noticed the faint contraction of anger in the tightness of his mouth as he signed the expected names of the expected fraud, anger at those who made fraud necessary. She noticed indifferently the air of knowing slyness in the manner of the hotel clerks which seemed to suggest that guests and clerks alike were accomplices in a shameful guilt, the guilt of seeking pleasure. But she knew that it did not matter to him when they were alone when he held her against him for a moment and she saw his eyes look alive and guiltless.

They drove through small towns through obscure wide roads through the kind of places they had not seen for years. She felt uneasiness at the sight of the towns. Days passed before she realized what it was that she missed most, a glimpse of fresh paint. The houses stood like men in unpressed suits who had lost the desire to stand straight, the cornices were like sagging shoulders, crooked porch steps like torn hem lines, the broken windows, patches mended with clapboard. The people in the streets stared at the new car not as one stares at a rare sight but as if the glittering black shape were an impossible vision from another world. There were few vehicles in the streets and too many of them were horse-drawn.

an Rearden  
all rails  
an ancient locomotive

They were seventy miles and an hour away from it when Hank said: "Hank, do you see the Taggart Comet being pulled across the continent by a coal burner of that kind?"

"What's the matter with you? Pull yourself together."

"I'm sorry. It's just that I keep thinking it won't be any all my new track and all your new furnaces if we don't find someone able to produce Diesel engines. If we don't find him fast."

"Ted Nielsen of Colorado is your man."

"Yes, if he finds a way to open his new plant. He's sunk more money than he should into the bonds of the John Galt Line."

"That's turned out to be a pretty profitable investment, hasn't it?"

"Yes, but it's held him up. Now he's ready to go ahead but can't find the tools. There are no machine tools to buy not where, not at any price. He's getting nothing but promises."

old junk to reclaim

o a place I'd like to

are Anywhere Which place?"

is in Wisconsin There used to be a great motor company

ou and it. What was the name of the factory?"

The Twentieth Century Motor Company"

th of an - 1920

ury Motor Company

"Thank, what if anything happens to Ted Nielsen?" she asked

lenly, as they drove in silence.

Why should anything happen to him?"

I don't know, but . . . well, there was Dwight Sanders. He  
used United Locomotives is done for now. And the other  
its are in no condition to produce Diesels. I've stopped listening  
promises. And . . . and of what use is a railroad without  
live power?"

"Of what use is . . ."

or miles,  
is colors  
burning

unchecked, untouched abundance

Rearden smiled. "There's something to be said for the wilderness  
beginning to like it. New country that nobody's discovered."  
He nodded again. " . . . way things grow. I'd

they saw in the weeds  
its of glass—the rem-

w charred posts the slab  
—which had been a gas  
o be noticed except by a  
other year

MANCO away. They drove on not wanting to know what  
lay hidden under the miles of weeds. They felt the same wonder  
a weight in the silence between them wonder as to how much  
weeds had swallowed and how fast.

The road ended abruptly behind the turn of a hill

was a few chunks of concrete sticking out of a long pitted  
of tar and mud. The concrete had been smashed by someone  
carted away; even weeds could not grow in the strip of earth  
behind. On the crest of a distant hill, a single telegraph pole too  
slanted against the sky, like a cross over a vast grave.

It took them three hours and a punctured tire to crawl in low  
through trackless soil, through gullies, then down ruts left  
wheels—to reach the settlement that lay in the valley beyond the  
hill with the telegraph pole.

A few houses still stood within the skeleton of what had once been  
an industrial town. Everything that could move, had moved and  
but some human beings had remained. The empty structures were  
vertical rubble. They had been eaten, not by time but by men,  
boards torn out at random, missing patches of roofs, holes left  
gutted cellars. It looked as if blind hands had seized whatever fit  
the need of the moment, with no concept of remaining in place  
the next morning. The inhabited houses were scattered at random  
among the ruins. The smoke of their chimneys was the only movement  
visible in the air.

Beyond the town, on a distant hill, stood the factory of  
Twentieth Century Motor Company. Its walls, roof lines and smoke  
stacks looked iron impregnable like a fortress. It would seem  
seemed intact but for a silver water tank the water tank had  
tipped sideways.

They saw no trace of a road to the factory in the tangled mass

She was bent and swollen, barefooted, dressed in a garment  
flour sacking. She looked at the car without astonishment, with  
curiosity, it was the blank stare of a being who had lost  
capacity for fear.

"Car"

The  
unable

Rear

"It's closed"

"I know it's closed. But is there any way to get there?"

"I don't know."

"Is there any sort of road?"

"There's roads in the woods."

"Any for a car to drive through?"

"Maybe."

"Well, which would be the best road to take?"

"I don't know."

Through the open door, they could see the interior of her house.  
There was a useless gas stove, its oven stuffed with rags. Beside  
a chest of drawers. There was a stove built of stones in a corner.

a few logs burning under an old kettle, and long streaks of rising up the wall. A white object lay propped against the legs of the table: it was a porcelain washbowl, torn from the wall of the bathroom, filled with wilted cabbages. A tallow candle stood in a bottle on the table. There was no paint left on the floor, its boards were scrubbed to a soggy gray that looked like the visual

Now, actually, one by one they stared at one another, but with no ready

"There ain't any next town."

"There are other towns somewhere. I mean, how far?"

"Yeah. Somewhere."

In the vacant space by the side of the house, they saw faded clothes hanging on a clothesline, which was a piece of telegraph wire. The chickens pecked among the beds of a scraggly vegetable garden, a fourth sat roosting on a bar which was a length of lumber's pipe. Two pigs waddled in a stretch of mud and refuse; stepping stones laid across the muck were pieces of the highway's concrete.

They heard a creak, like . . .

He not lifting a hand for it, still clutching the two buckets. If one were ever to see a man devoid of greed, thought Dagny, there he is.

"We don't need no money around here," he said.

"Don't you work for a living?"

"Yeah."

"Well, what do you use for money?"

The man put the buckets down, as if it had just occurred to him that he did not have to stand straining under their weight. "We can't use no money," he said. "We just trade things amongst us."

"How do you trade with people from other towns?"

"We don't go to no other towns."

"You don't seem to have it easy here."

"What's that to you?"

"Nothing. Just curiosity. Why do you people stay here?"

My old man used to have a grocery store here. Only the factory closed."

"Why didn't you move?"

"Where to?"

"Anywhere."

"What for?"

Dagny was staring at the two buckets. They were square tins with rope handles. They had been oil cans.

Listen, said Rearden, "can you tell us whether there's a road to the factory?"

"There's plenty of roads."

"Is there one that a car can take?"

"I guess so."

"Which one?"

The man weighed the problem earnestly for some moments. Well, now, if you turn to the left by the schoolhouse, he said, and go on till you come to the crooked oak, there's a road up there that's fine when it don't rain for a couple of weeks."

When did it rain last?

"Yesterday."

Is there another road?

Well, you could go through Hanson's pasture and across the woods, and then there's a good solid road there all the way down to the creek."

"Is there a bridge across the creek?"

"No."

What are the other roads?

Well, if it's a car road that you want, there's one the other side of Miller's patch. It's paved, it's the best road for a car. You just turn to the right by the schoolhouse and—

"But that road doesn't go to the factory, does it?"

"No, not to the factory."

All right, said Rearden. Guess we'll find our own way."

He had pressed the starter when a rock came smashing into the windshield. The glass was shatterproof, but a sunburst of crack spread across it. They saw a ragged little hoodlum vanishing behind a corner with a scream of laughter, and they heard the shrieking laughter of children answering him from behind some windows & crevices.

The man looked rapidly across

A woman looked on without

watching without interest

on a photographic plate as

absorbing visual shapes because they were there to be absorbed, but unable ever to form any estimate of the objects of her vision.

Dagny had been studying her for some minutes. The swollen shapelessness of the woman's body did not look like the product of age and neglect. It looked as if she was pregnant. This seemed impossible, but glancing closer Dagny saw that her dust-colored hair was not gray and that there were few wrinkles on her face. It was only the vacant eyes, the stooped shoulders, the shuffling move-

ents that gave her the stamp of senility.

Dagny leaned out and asked, "How old are you?"

The woman looked at her and said nothing.

un 11

"Yes."

"God, how did they ever come to such a state?"

He shrugged "Who is John Galt?"

The last thing they saw, as they left the town, was a billboard design was still visible on its peeling strips, unprinted in the id way that had once been color. It advertised a washing machine in a distant field, beyond the town, they saw the figure of a man moving slowly, contorted by the ugliness of a physical effort beyond proper use of a human body—he was pushing a plow by hand. They reached the factory of the Twentieth Century Motor Company two miles and two hours later. They knew, as they climbed the hill, that their quest was useless. A rusted padlock hung on the door of the main entrance, but the huge windows were shattered. The place was open to anyone, to the woodchucks, the rabbits, the dried leaves that lay in drifts inside.

The factory had been gutted long ago. The great pieces of machinery had been moved out by some civilized means—the neat ends of their bases still remained in the concrete of the floor. The place had gone to random looters. There was nothing left, except the things which the neediest tramp had found worthless, piles of steel, rusted scraps, of boards, plaster and glass splinters—and steel stairways, built to last and lasting, rising in trim spirals to the roof.

They stopped in the great hall where a ray of light fell diagonally in a gap in the ceiling, and the echoes of their steps rang around them, dying far away in rows of empty rooms. A bird darted from among the steel rafters and went in a hussing streak of wings out into the sky.

"We'd better look through it just in case," said Dagny. "You take the shops and I'll take the annexes. Let's do it as fast as possible."

"I don't like to let you wander around alone. I don't know how they are, any of those floors or stairways."

"Oh, nonsense! I can find my way around a factory—or in a wrecking crew. Let's get it over with. I want to get out of here."

Then she walked through the silent yards—where steel bridges hung overhead, tracing lines of geometrical perfection across the sky—her only wish was not to see any of it, but she forced herself to look. It was like having to perform an autopsy on the body of one's love. She moved her glance as an automatic searchlight, her head clamped tight together. She walked rapidly—there was no room to pause anywhere.

It was in a room of what had been the laboratory that she saw a coil of wire that made her stop. The coil protruded from a pile of junk. She had never seen that particular

wires yet it seemed familiar, as if it touched the hint of some memory faint and very distant. She reached for the coil but could not move it—it seemed to be part of some object buried in the pile.

The room looked as if it had been an experimental laboratory—if she was right in judging the purpose of the torn remnants she saw on the walls—a great many electrical outlets bits of heavy cable lead conduits glass tubing built in cabinets without shelves or doors. There was a great deal of glass rubber, plastic and metal in the junk pile and dark gray splinters of slate that had been a blackboard. Scraps of paper rustled dryly all over the floor. There were also remnants of things which had not been brought here by the owner of that room—popcorn wrappers, a whiskey bottle, a confession magazine.

She attempted to extricate the coil from the scrap pile. It would not move—it was part of some large object. She knelt and began to dig through the junk.

She had cut her hands—she was covered with dust by the time she stood up to look at the object she had cleared. It was the broken remnant of the model of a motor. Most of its parts were missing but enough was left to convey some idea of its former shape and purpose.

She had never seen a motor of this kind or anything resembling it. She could not understand the peculiar design of its parts or the functions they were intended to perform.

She examined the tarnished tubes and odd-shaped connections. She tried to guess their purpose—her mind going over every type of motor she knew and every possible kind of work its parts could perform. None fitted the model. It looked like an electric motor but she could not tell. It was a motor. It was a motor. It was a motor.

She searched the wreckage, seizing every piece of paper in sight, flinging it away, searching further. Her hands were shaking.

She found part of what she hoped had remained in existence—a thin sheaf of typewritten pages clamped together—the remnant of a manuscript. Its beginning and end were gone—the bits of paper left under the clamp showed the thick number of pages it had once contained. The paper was yellowed and dry. The manuscript had been a description of the motor.

From the empty enclosure of the plant's powerhouse Reard heard her voice screaming. Hank! It sounded like a scream of terror.

He ran in the direction of the voice. He found her standing in the middle of a room—her hands bleeding—her stockings torn, her shoes

at an  
obsess  
lity "W

"Are you hurt? What happened?"

of . Oh, never mind, don't look at me! I'm all right Look  
 " Do you know what that is?  
 " That did you do to yourself?"  
 " Had to dig it out of there I'm all right "  
 " You're shaking "

ou're shaking"  
ou will too in a moment Hank! Look at it Just look and  
ne what you think it is"

He glanced down, then looked attentively—then he was sitting on the floor, studying the object intently. "It's a queer way to put a motor together," he said, frowning.

lead this," she said, extending the pages

He read, looked up and said, "Good God!"

He read, looked up and said, "Good. Good."  
He was sitting on the floor beside him, and for a moment they  
did say nothing else.

"It was the coal," she said. She felt as if her mind were racing, could not keep up with all the things which a sudden blast had led to her vision, and her words came hurtling against one another. "It was the coal that I noticed first—because I had seen her."

“I was thinking of it—they worked on it, they spent years on experiments, but they couldn’t solve it and they gave it up. It was forgotten for generations. I didn’t think that any living scientist thought of it now. But someone did. Someone has solved it now today! Hank, do you understand? Those men long ago tried to invent a motor that would draw static electricity from the atmosphere, convert it and create its own power as it went along. They couldn’t do it. They gave it up.” She pointed to the broken shape. “But there it is.”

He nodded. He was not smiling. He sat looking at the remnant, lost in some thought of his own. It did not seem to be a happy thought.

"Hank! Don't you understand what this means? It's the greatest revolution in power motors since the internal-combustion engine—faster than that to wear everything out—and makes everything

22 of a single Diesel unit, and with ten times the power of a motor, working on a few drops of fuel with no limits to its energy. The cleanest, swiftest, cheapest means of motion ever conceived. Do you see what this will do to our transportation systems and to the country—in about one year?"

There was no spark of excitement in his face. He said slowly, "Who designed it? Why was it left here?"

"We'll find out," he said firmly. "Daggy."

He weighed the pages in his hand reflectively. "Dagny," he said, "if you don't find the man who made it, will you be so reconstruct that motor from what is left?"



She took a long moment, then the word fell with a sinking soul.  
"No."

"Nobody will. He had it all right. It worked—judging by what he writes here. It is the greatest thing I've ever laid eyes on. It was. We can't make it work again. To supply what's missing would take a mind as great as his."

"I'll find him—if I have to drop every other thing I'm doing."

"—and if he's still alive."

She heard the unstated guess in the tone of his voice. "Why do you say it like that?"

"I don't think he is. If he were, would he leave an invention of this kind to rot on a junk pile? Would he abandon an achievement of this size? If he were still alive you would have had the locomotive with the self generators years ago. And you wouldn't have had to look for him because the whole world would know his name by now."

"I don't think this model was made so very long ago."

He looked at the paper of the manuscript and at the rusty turn of the motor. "About ten years ago, I'd guess. Maybe a bit longer."

"We've got to find him or somebody who knew him. This is more important—"

"—than anything owned or manufactured by anyone today. I don't think we'll find him. And if we don't, nobody will be able to repeat his performance. Nobody will rebuild his motor. There's not enough of it left. It's only a lead, an invaluable lead, but it would take the sort of mind that's born once in a century, to complete it. Do you see our present-day motor designers attempt it?"

"No."

"There's not a first rate designer left. There hasn't been a first idea in motors for years. That's one profession that seems to be dying—or dead."

"Hank, do you know what that motor would have meant, built?"

He chuckled briefly. "I'd say about ten years added to the life of every person in this country—if you consider how many things it would have made easier and cheaper to produce, how many hours of human labor it would have released for other work, and how much more anyone's work would have brought him. Locomotives. What about automobiles and ships and airplanes with a motor of this kind? And tractors. And power plants. All hooked to an unlimited supply of energy, with no fuel to pay for, except a few pennies' worth to keep the converter going. That motor could have set the whole country in motion and on fire. It would have brought an electric light bulb into every hole, even into the homes of the people we saw down in the valley."

"It would have? It will. I'm going to find the man who made it."

"We'll try."

He rose abruptly but stopped to glance down at the broken  
nant and said with a chuckle that was not gay "There was the  
door for the John Galt Line"

Then he spoke in the brusque manner of an executive "First,  
we'll try to see if we can find their personnel office here We'll  
ask for their records, if there's any left. We want the names of  
our research staff and their engineers I don't know who owns  
the place now and I suspect that the owners will be hard to  
find, or they wouldn't have let it come to this Then we'll go over  
every room in the laboratory Later, we'll get a few engineers to  
come here and comb the rest of the place"

They went on the threshold

It was the one thing nobody found worth the  
trouble of taking

"That's what frightens me about this" he answered  
They found it by  
ft.  
ers

and  
or  
to  
ere  
laboratory notes, but none retained to the  
were no pages of the manuscript among them The popcorn  
wrappers and the whiskey bottle testified to the kind of invading  
forces that had rolled through the room like waves washing the  
remnants of destruction away to unknown bottoms

They put aside a few bits of metal that could have belonged  
to the motor, but these were too small to be of value The motor  
looked as if parts of it had been ripped off perhaps by someone  
who thought he could put them to some customary use What find  
named was too unfamiliar to interest anybody

On aching knees, her palms spread flat upon the gritty floor,  
she felt the anger trembling within her the burning helpless anger  
at answers the sight of desecration. She wondered whether some  
one's diapers hung on a clothesline made of the motor's missing  
parts—whether its wheels had become a rope pulley over a com  
mon well—whether its cylinder was now a pot containing gera  
ms on the window sill of the sweetheart of the man with the  
whiskey bottle

There was a remnant of light on the hill but a blue haze was  
sweeping in upon the valleys and the red and gold of the leaves  
was spreading to the sky in strips of sunset

It was dark when they finished. She rose and leaned against the  
empty frame of the window for a touch of cool air on her forehead  
The sky was dark blue "It could have set the whole country  
on fire" She looked down at the motor She  
sat at the country She moaned suddenly, but by a single

shudder and dropped her head on her arm standing pressed to the frame of the window

"What's the matter?" he asked

She did not answer

He looked out Far below in the valley in the gathering night there trembled a few pale smears which were the lights of tallow candles

## Chapter X WYATT'S TORCH

"God have mercy on us ma'am!" said the clerk of the Hall of Records Nobody knows who owns that factory now I guess nobody will ever know it

The clerk sat at a desk in a ground floor office where dust lay undisturbed on the files and few visitors ever called He looked at the shining automobile parked outside his window in the muddy square that had once been the center of a prosperous court then he looked with a faint wistful wonder at his two unknown visitors

"Why?" asked Dagny

He pointed helplessly at the mass of papers he had taken out of the files "The court will have to decide who owns it which I don't think any court can do If a court ever gets to it, I don't think it will

"Why? What happened?"

"Well it was sold out—the Twentieth Century I mean The Twentieth Century Motor Company It was sold twice at the same time and to two different sets of owners That was sort of a big scandal at the time two years ago and now it's just"—he pointed—"just a bunch of paper lying around waiting for a court hearing I don't see how any judge will be able to untangle all property rights out of it—or any right at all

"Would you tell me please just what happened?"

"Well the last legal owner of the factory was The People's Mortgage Company of Rome Wisconsin That's the town on the other side of the factory thirty miles north That Mortgage Company was a sort of no-ty outfit that did a lot of advertising about easy credit Mark Yonts was the head of it Nobody knew where he came from and nobody knows where he's gone to now but what they discovered the morning after The People's Mortgage Company collapsed was that Mark Yonts had sold the Twentieth Century Motor Company to the Dakota National Bank in Minneapolis

Dakota National Bank in Minneapolis

discovered

meal

Gi

only knows where and to whom So it seems like everybody owns the place—and nobody That's how it stands now—the South Dakotans and the bank and the attorney for the creditors of The People's Mortgage Company all suing one another all claiming

is factory, and nobody having the right to move a wheel in it, except that there's no wheels left to move."

"Did Mark Yonts operate the factory before he sold it?"

"Lord, no, ma'am! He wasn't the kind that ever operates anything. He didn't want to *make* money, only to *get* it. Guess he got too—more than anyone could have made out of that factory."

He wondered why the blond, hard faced man who sat with the man in front of his desk, looked grumly out the window at his car, at a large object wrapped in canvas roped tightly under raised cover of the car's luggage compartment.

"What happened to the factory records?"

"Which do you mean, ma'am?"

"Their production records. Their work records. Their . . . personnel files."

"Oh, there's nothing left of that now. There's been a lot of looting going on. All the mixed owners grabbed what furniture or things they could haul out of there, even if the sheriff did put a lock on the door. The papers and stuff like that—I guess it's all taken by the scavengers from Starnesville, that's the place down in the valley, where they're having it pretty tough these days. They burned the stuff for kindling, most likely."

"Is there anyone left here who used to work in the factory?" asked Rearden.

"No, sir. Not around here. They all lived down in Starnesville."

"All of them?" whispered Dagny, she was thinking of the ruins he . . . engineers, too?"

"Yes, ma'am. That was the factory town. They've all gone, long ago."

"Do you happen to remember the names of any men who worked there?"

"No, ma'am."

"What owner was the last to operate the factory?" asked Rearden.

"I couldn't say, sir. There's been so much trouble up there and the place has changed hands so many times, since old Jed Starnes died. He's the man who built the factory. He made this whole part of the country, I guess. He died twelve years ago."

"Can you give us the names of all the owners since?"

"No, sir. We had a fire in the old courthouse, about three years ago, and all the old records are gone. I don't know where you could trace them now."

"You don't know how this Mark Yonts happened to acquire the factory?"

"Yes, I know that. He bought it from Mayor Bascom of Rome. Now Mayor Bascom happened to own it, I don't know."

"Where is Mayor Bascom now?"

"Still there, in Rome."

"Thank you very much," said Rearden, rising. "We'll call on you."

They were at the door when the clerk asked, "What is it for, sir?"

"We're looking for a friend of ours," said Rearden. "A friend we've lost, who used to work in that factory."

Mayor Bascom of Rome, Wisconsin, leaned back in his chair, his chest and stomach formed a pear-shaped outline under his soiled shirt. The air was a mixture of sun and dust, pressing heavily upon the porch of his house. He waved his arm, the ring on his finger flashing a large topaz of poor quality.

"No use, no use, lady, absolutely no use," he said. "Would be just a waste of your time, trying to question the folks around here. There's no factory people left, and nobody that would remember much about them. So many families have moved away that what's left here is plain no good, if I do say so myself, plain no good, just being Mayor of a bunch of trash."

He had offered chairs to his two visitors, but he did not mind it if the lady preferred to stand at the porch railing. He leaned back, studying her long lined figure, high-class merchandise, he thought, but then the man with her was obviously rich.

Dagny stood looking at the streets of Rome. There were houses, sidewalks, lampposts, even a sign advertising soft drinks, but they looked as if it were now only a matter of inches and hours before the town would reach the stage of Starnesville.

"Now, there's no factory records left," said Mayor Bascom. "If

one's got to be practical."

Through the dusty windowpanes, they could see the living room of his house. There were Persian rugs on a buckled wooden floor, a portable bar with chromium strips against a wall stained by the seepage of last year's rains, an expensive radio with an old kerosene lamp placed on top of it.

"Sure, it's me that sold the factory to Mark Yonts. Mark was a nice fellow, a nice, lively, energetic fellow. Sure, he did trim a few corners, but who doesn't? Of course, he went a bit too far. That I didn't expect. I thought he was smart enough to stay within the law—whatever's left of it nowadays."

Mayor Bascom smiled, looking at them in a manner of placid frankness. His eyes were shrewd without intelligence, his smile good-natured without kindness.

"I don't think you folks are detectives," he said, "but even if you were, it wouldn't matter to me. I didn't get any rake-off from Mark, he didn't let me in on any of his deals, I haven't any idea where he's gone to now." He sighed. "I liked that fellow. Wish he'd stayed around. Never mind the Sunday sermons. He had to live, didn't he? He was no worse than anybody, only smarter. Some get caught at it and some don't—that's the only difference. Nope, I didn't know what he was going to do with it, when he bought that factory. Sure, he paid me quite a bit more than the old poopy trap was worth. Sure, he was doing me a favor when he bought it. Nope, I didn't put any pressure on him to make him

by it. Wasn't necessary I'd done him a few favors before. There's plenty of laws that's sort of made of rubber and a mayor's in position to stretch them a bit for a friend. Well, what the hell? That's the only way anybody ever gets rich in this world"—he glanced at the luxurious black car—"as you ought to know."

"You were telling us about the factory," said Rearden trying to control himself.

"What I can't stand," said Mayor Bascom, "is people who talk about principles. No principle ever filled anybody's milk bottle. The only thing that counts in life is solid material assets. It's no time for theories, when everything is falling to pieces around us. Well, so—I don't aim to go under. Let them keep their ideas and I'll take the factory. I don't want ideas, I just want my three square meals a day."

"Why did you buy that factory?"

"Why does anybody buy any business? To squeeze whatever can be squeezed out of it. I know a good chance when I see it. It was a bankruptcy sale and nobody much would want to bid on the old mess. So I got the place for peanuts. Didn't have to hold it long either—Mark took it off my hands in two three months. Sure it was a smart deal, if I say so myself. No big business tycoon could have done any better with it."

"Was the factory operating when you took it over?"

"Naw. It was shut down."

"Did you attempt to reopen it?"

"Not me. I'm a practical person."

"Can you recall the names of any men who worked there?"

"No. Never met 'em."

"Did you move anything out of the factory?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I took a look around—and what I liked was old Jed's desk. Old Jed Starnes. He was a real big shot in his time. Wonderful desk, solid mahogany. So I carted it home. And some executive don't know who he was had a stall shower in his bathroom the like of which I never saw. A glass door with a mermaid cut in the glass, real art work and hot stuff too. Hotter than any oil painting. So I had that shower lifted and moved here. What the hell I owned it, didn't I? I was entitled to get something valuable out of that factory."

"Whose bankruptcy sale was it when you bought the factory?"

"Oh, that was the big crash of the Community National Bank in Madison. Boy, was that a crash! It just about finished the whole state of Wisconsin—sure finished this part of it. Some say it was his motor factory that broke the bank, but others say it was only the last drop in a leaking bucket, because the Community National had burned investments all over three or four states. Eugene Lawson was the head of it. The banker with a heart. They called him. He was on the farm—"

busted three months later." He sighed "It hit the folks pretty hard around here. They all had their life savings in the Community National."

Mayor Bascom looked regretfully past his porch railing at his town. He jerked his thumb at a figure across the street. It was a white haired charwoman, moving painfully on her knees, scrubbing the steps of a house.

"See that woman for instance? They used to be solid, respectable folks. Her husband owned the dry-goods store. He worked all his life to provide for her in her old age, and he did, too, by the time he died—only the money was in the Community National Bank."

"Who operated the factory when it failed?"

"Oh that was some quicky corporation called Amalgamated Service, Inc. Just a puff ball. Came up out of nothing and went back to it."

"Where are its members?"

"Where are the pieces of a puff ball when it bursts? Try and trace them all over the United States. Try it."

"Where is Eugene Lawson?"

"Oh him? He's done all right. He's got a job in Washington—in the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources."

Rearden rose too fast, thrown to his feet by a jolt of anger, then said, controlling himself "Thank you for the information."

"You're welcome, friend, you're welcome," said Mayor Bascom placidly. "I don't know what it is you're after, but take my word for it, give it up. There's nothing more to be had out of that factory."

"I told you that we are looking for a friend of ours."

"Well, have it your way. Must be a pretty good friend, if you'll go to so much trouble to find him, you and the charming lady who is not your wife."

Dagny saw Rearden's face go white, so that even his lips became a sculptured feature, indistinguishable against his skin. "Keep your dirty—" he began, but she stepped between them.

"Why do you think that I am not his wife?" she asked calmly.

Mayor Bascom looked astonished. "He said that," he had made the remark without malice, playing his shrewdness to his profit.

"Lady, I've seen a lot in my life."

"Married people don't look as if they have a bedroom on their minds when they look at each other. In this world, either you're virtuous or you enjoy yourself. Not both, lady, not both."

"I've asked him a question," she said to Rearden in time to silence him. "He's given me an instructive explanation."

"If you want it up, lady," said Mayor Bascom, "get yourself a wedding ring from the dime store and wear it. It's not sure fire, but it helps."

"Thank you," she said. "Good bye."

The stern, stressed calm of her manner was a command that Rearden follow her back to their car in silence.

they were miles beyond the town when he said, not looking at his voice desperate and low, "Dagny, Dagny, Dagny . . . sorry!"

"I'm not."

Moments later, when she saw the look of control returning to his face, she said, "Don't ever get angry at a man for stating the facts."

"That particular truth was none of his business."

"His particular estimate of it was none of your concern or business."

"He said through his teeth, not as an answer, but as if the single thought battering his brain turned into sounds against his will, "I can't protect you from that unspeakable little—"

"I didn't need protection."

She remained silent, not looking at her

husband, when you're able to keep down the anger, tomorrow or next week, give some thought to that man's explanation and see if you recognize any part of it."

He jerked his head to glance at her, but said nothing.

When he spoke, a long time later, it was only to say in a tired, low voice, "We can't call New York and have our engineers come to search the factory. We can't meet them here. We can't let them know that we found the motor together. I had forgotten all that . . . up there . . . in the laboratory."

"Let me call Eddie, when we find a telephone. I'll have him and two engineers from the Taggart staff. I'm here alone, on my own, for all they'll know or have to know."

They drove two hundred miles before they found a long-distance telephone line. When she called Eddie Willers, he gasped, hearing her voice.

"Dagny! For God's sake, where are you?"

"In Wisconsin. Why?"

"I didn't know where to reach you. You'd better come back at once."

"As fast as you can."

"What happened?"

"Nothing—yet. But there are things going on which . . . You'd better stop them now, if you can. If anybody can."

"What things?"

"Haven't you been reading the newspapers?"

"No."

"I can't tell you over the phone. I can't give you all the details. But, you'll think I'm insane, but I think they're planning to kill me."

"I'll come back at once," she said.

But into the granite of Manhattan, under the Taggart Terminal, there were tunnels which had once been used as sidings. At a time when traffic ran in clicking currents through every artery of the terminal every hour of the day. The need for space had diminished through the years, with the shrinking of the traffic, and the tunnels had been abandoned, like dry river beds, a few



remained as blue patches on the granite over rails left to rust on the ground

Dagny placed the remnant of the motor into a vault in one of the tunnels, the vault had once contained an emergency electric generator, which had been removed long ago. She did not trust the useless young men of the Taggart research staff, there were only two engineers of talent among them, who could appreciate her discovery. She had shared her secret with the two and sent them to search the factory in Wisconsin. Then she had hidden the motor where no one else would know of its existence.

When her workers carried the motor down to the vault and departed she was  
she stopped key  
thrown her at the  
were the moment to make her decision

Her office car was waiting for her at one of the Terminal platform  
attached to the end of the line for Washington

the things she had found on her return to New York, the  
Eddie begged her to fight

She had tried to think, but she could see no way of fighting, no rules of battle, no weapons. Helplessness was a strange experience new to her, she had never found it hard to face things and make decisions.

her glance, she had no glance to move and focus

The Union of Locomotive Engineers was demanding that the maximum speed of all trains on the John Galt Line be reduced to sixty miles an hour. The Union of Railway Conductors and Brakemen was demanding that the length of all freight trains on the John Galt Line be reduced to sixty cars.

The states of Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah and Arizona were demanding that the number of trains run in Colorado not exceed the number of trains run in each of these neighboring states.

A group headed by Orren Boyle was demanding the passage of a

fair share Law to give every customer who wanted it an equal supply of Rearden Metal

A group headed by Bertram Scudder was demanding the passage of a Public Stability Law, forbidding Eastern business firms to move out of their states

Wesley Mouch, Top Co-ordinator of the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources, was issuing a great many

ents, the content and purpose of which could not be defined, except that the words "emergency powers" and "unbalanced economy" kept appearing in the text every few lines.

"Dagny by what right?" Eddie Willers had asked her his voice set, but the words sounding like a cry. By what right are they all doing it? By what right?"

She had confronted James Taggart in his office and said "Jim, this is your battle. I've fought mine. You're supposed to be an expert dealing with the looters. Stop them."

" . . . act to run the

" . . . your national

" . . . to run—and

" . . . economy if my

abroad collapses!"

"I see no necessity for panic."

"Jim, do I have to explain to you that the income from our Rio Norte Line is all we've got, to save us from collapsing? That we've used every penny of it, every fare, every carload of freight—just as fast as we can get it?" He had not answered. "When we have to use every bit of power in every one of our broken-down Diesels, when we don't have enough of them to give Colorado the service it needs—what's going to happen if we reduce the speed and the length of trains?"

"Well, there's something to be said for the unions' viewpoint too. With so many railroads closing and so many railroad men out of work, they feel that those extra speeds you've established on the Rio Norte Line are unfair—they feel that there should be more trains, instead so that the work would be divided around—they feel that it's not fair for us to get all the benefit of that new rail. They want a share of it, too."

"Who wants a share of it? In payment for what?" He had not answered. "Who'll bear the cost of two trains doing the work of one?" He had not answered. "Where are you going to get the cars and the engines?" He had not answered. "What are those men going to do after they've put Taggart Transcontinental out of existence?"

"I fully intend to protect the interests of Taggart Transcontinental."

"How?" He had not answered. "How—if you kill Colorado?"

"It seems to me that before we worry about giving some people a chance to expand, we ought to give some consideration to the people who need a chance of bare survival."

"If you kill Colorado, what is there going to be left for your damn looters to survive on?"

"You have always been opposed to every progressive social measure. I seem to remember that you predicted disaster when we passed the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule—but the disaster has come."

"Because I saved you, you rotten fools! I won't be able to save

this time!" He had shrugged, not looking at her "And if I don't, who will?" He had not answered

It did not seem real to her, here, under the ground. Thinking of it here, she knew she could have no part in Jim's battle. There was no action she could take against the men of undefined thought, of unnamed motives, of unstated purposes, of unspecified morality. There was nothing she could say to them—nothing would be heard or answered. What were the weapons, she thought, in a realm where reason was not a weapon any longer? It was a realm she could not enter. She had to leave it to Jim and count on his self interest. Dimly, she felt the chill of a thought telling her that self interest was not Jim's motive.

She looked at the object before her, a glass case containing the remnant of the motor. The man who made the motor—she thought suddenly, the thought coming like a cry of despair. She felt a moment's helpless longing to find him, to lean against him and let him tell her what to do. A mind like his would know the way to win the battle.

She . . . of the under  
ground . . .  
of fin . . .  
delay . . .

Mowen!—to plead with Bertram Scudder? She saw the mill, completed, built into an engine that pulled a train of two hundred cars down a track of Rearden Metal at two hundred miles an hour. When the vision was within her reach, within the possible, would she to give it up and spend her time bargaining about sixty miles and sixty cars? She could not descend to an existence where her brain would explode under the pressure of forcing itself not to succumb to distance incompetence. She could not function to the rule of "slow down—keep down—slow down—don't do your best, it is not wanted!"

She turned resolutely and left the vault, to take the train for Washington.

It seemed to her, as she locked the steel door, that she heard a faint echo of steps. She glanced up and down the dark curve of the tunnel. There was no one in sight, there was nothing but a string of blue lights glistening on walls of damp granite.

Rearden could not fight the gangs who demanded the laws. His choice was to fight them or to keep his mills open. He had lost his supply of iron ore. He had to fight one battle or the other. There was no time for both.

He had found on his return, that a scheduled shipment of iron had not been delivered. No word or explanation had been heard from Larkin. When summoned to Rearden's office, Larkin appeared three days later than the appointment made, offering no apology. He said, not looking at Rearden, his mouth drawn tightly into an expression of rancorous dignity.

"After all you can't order people to come running to your office at any time you please."

Rearden spoke slowly and carefully "Why wasn't the ore delivered?"

"I won't take abuse, I simply won't take any abuse for something that didn't help. I can run a mine just as well as you ran it, every way as well, I did everything you did—I don't know why something keeps going wrong unexpectedly all the time. I can't be blamed for the unexpected."

"To whom did you ship your ore last month?"

"I intended to ship you your share of it. I fully intended it, but I didn't help it if we lost ten days of production last month on account of the rainstorm in the whole of north Minnesota—I intended to ship you the ore, so you can't blame me, because my intention was completely honest."

"If one of my blast furnaces goes down, will I be able to keep it going by feeding your intention into it?"

"That's why nobody can deal with you or talk to you—because you're inhuman."

"I have just learned that for the last three months you have not been shipping your ore by the lake boats, you have been shipping it by rail. Why?"

"Well, after all, I have a right to run my business as I see fit."

"Why are you willing to pay the extra cost?"

"What do you care? I'm not charging it to you."

"What will you do when you find that you can't afford the rail rates and that you have destroyed the lake shipping?"

"I am sure you wouldn't understand any consideration other than dollars and cents, but some people do consider their social and patriotic responsibilities."

"What responsibilities?"

"Well, I think that a railroad like Taggart Transcontinental is essential to the national welfare and it is one's public duty to support Jim's Minnesota branch line which is running at a deficit." Rearden leaned forward across the desk he was beginning to see the links of a sequence he had never understood. "To whom did you ship your ore last month?" he asked evenly.

"Well, after all, that is my private business which—"

"To Orren Boyle, wasn't it?"

"You can't expect people to sacrifice the entire steel industry of the nation to your selfish interests and—"

"Get out of here," said Rearden. He said it calmly. The sequence was clear to him now.

"Don't misunderstand me, I didn't mean—"

"Get out."

Larkin got out.

Then there followed the days and nights of searching a continent by phone, by wire, by plane—of looking at abandoned mines and at mines ready to be abandoned—of tense rush-hour conferences held at tables in the unlighted corners of disreputable restaurants. Looking across the table Rearden had to decide each time he could risk to invest upon the sole evidence of a

face, manner and tone of voice, hating the state of having to hope for honesty as for a favor, but risking it, pouring money into unknown hands in exchange for unsupported promises into unsigned, unrecorded loans to dummy owners of failing mines—money handed and taken furtively, as an exchange between criminals, in anonymous cash, money poured into unenforceable contracts—both parties knowing that in case of fraud, the defrauded was to be punished, not the defrauder—but poured that a stream of ore might continue flowing into furnaces, that the furnaces might continue to pour a stream of white metal

"Mr Rearden," asked the purchasing manager of his mills, "if you keep that up where will be your profit?"

"We'll make it up on tonnage," said Rearden wearily "We have an unlimited market for Rearden Metal"

The purchasing manager was an elderly man with graying hair, a lean, dry face, and a heart which, people said, was given exclusively to the task of squeezing every last ounce of value out of a penny He stood in front of Rearden's desk, saying nothing else, merely looking straight at Rearden his cold eyes narrowed and grim It was a look of the most profound sympathy that Rearden had ever seen

There's no other course open, thought Rearden, as he had thought through days and nights He knew no weapons but to pay for what he wanted, to give value for value, to ask nothing of nature without trading his effort in return, to ask nothing of men without trading the product of his effort What were the weapons, he thought, if values were not a weapon any longer?

"An unlimited market, Mr Rearden?" the purchasing manager asked dryly

Rearden glanced up at him "I guess I'm not smart enough to make the sort of deals needed nowadays," he said, in answer to the unspoken thoughts that hung across his desk

"That's all right," said the purchasing manager "I've learned it the hard way"

"You couldn't learn it and it wouldn't do you any good you wouldn't win in any of those deals Don't you understand? You're the one who's got something to be looted"

When he was left alone, Rearden felt a jolt of blinding anger, as if it had come to him before, painful, single and sudden like an electric shock—the anger bursting out of the knowledge that one cannot deal with pure evil, with the naked, full-conscious evil that neither has nor seeks justification. But when he felt the will to fight and kill in the rightful cause of self-defense—he saw the fat grinning face of Mayor Bascom and heard the drawling voice saying "You and the charming lady who is not your wife"

Then no rightful cause was left, and the pain of anger was turning into the shameful pain of submission He had no right to condemn anyone—he thought—to denounce anything to fight and joyously, claiming the sanction of virtue The broken promises

unconfessed desires, the betrayal, the decent, the lies, the fraud  
■ was guilty of them all. What form of corruption could he  
in? Degrees do not matter, he thought, one does not bargain  
out inches of evil.

shooters, but the wrath and the fire were gone. He would fight, but  
ly as one guilty wretch against the others. He did not pronounce  
words, but the pain was their equivalent, the ugly pain saying  
to am I to cast the first stone?

He let his body fall across the desk. Dagny, he thought,  
any, if this is the price I have to pay, I'll pay it. He was still  
a trader who knew no code except that of full payment for his  
wares.

It was late when he came home and hurried soundlessly up the  
stairs to his bedroom.

He dwinedly that this was not the root of his hatred.  
He closed the door of his bedroom like a fugitive winning a mo-  
ment's reprieve. He moved cautiously, undressing for bed. He wanted  
sound to betray his presence to his family, he wanted no contact  
with them, not even in their own minds.

He had put on his pajamas and stopped to light a cigarette, when  
the door of his bedroom opened. The only person who could prop-  
erly enter his room without knocking had never volunteered to  
do it, so he stared blankly for a moment before he was able to  
believe that it was Lillian who came in.

She stood in the doorway, looking at him.

He said, "but I'll have to—my name is Mrs. Rearden." He could not  
tell whether it was sarcasm or a plea.

She entered and threw the door closed with a casual, imperious  
gesture, the gesture of an owner.

"What is it, Lillian?" he asked quietly.

She moved down in front of him, her face an open  
book.

He sat at his desk.

He will  
do it.

orders  
the politic  
situation I just want to chatter like a woman about perfectly important things"

"Go ahead"

"Henry, there's no better way to stop me, is there?" She had an air of helpless, appealing sincerity "What can I say after that? I suppose I wanted to tell you about the new novel which Basil Lubbock is writing—he is dedicating it to me—would that interest you?"

"If it's the truth you want—not in the least"

She laughed "And if it's not the truth that I want?"

"Then I wouldn't know what to say," he answered—and felt a rush of blood to his brain, tight as a slap, realizing suddenly the double infamy of a lie uttered in protestation of honesty, he had said it sincerely but it implied a boast to which he had no right to longer "Why would you want it, if it's not the truth?" he asked "What for?"

"Now I wouldn't know what to say," he answered—and felt a rush of blood to his brain, tight as a slap, realizing suddenly the double infamy of a lie uttered in protestation of honesty, he had said it sincerely but it implied a boast to which he had no right to longer "Why would you want it, if it's not the truth?" he asked "What for?"

"No," he said slowly, "I wouldn't understand it"

"It's really very simple. If you tell a beautiful woman that she is beautiful, what have you given her? It's no more than a fact and has cost you nothing. But if you tell an ugly woman that she is beautiful, you offer her the great homage of corrupting the conception of beauty. To love a woman for her virtues is meaningless. She has earned it—it's a payment, not a gift. But to love her for her vices is a real gift, unearned and undeserved. To love her for her vices is to defile all virtue for her sake—and that is a real tribute of love, because you sacrifice your conscience, your reason, your integrity and your invaluable self-esteem"

He looked at her blankly. It sounded like some sort of monstrous corruption that precluded the possibility of wondering whether a man could mean it, he wondered only what was the point of uttering it.

"What's love, darling, if it's not a selfishness of the rawest?"

selfishness of the rawest  
than soil that immaculate  
self or yours with a single spot of which you'd have to be ashamed"

He said slowly, his voice oddly strained and solemn, "I have never claimed to be immaculate"

He laughed "And what is it you're being right now? You're giving me an honest answer, aren't you?" She shrugged her naked

kept  
king that I had a husband and I wanted to find out what he  
ted like."

He studied him as he stood across the room, the tall, straight, taut  
s of his body emphasized by the single color of the dark blue  
was.

"You're very attractive," she said "You look so much better—  
the last few months Younger Should I say happier? You look less  
a. Oh, I know you're rushed more than ever and you act like a  
wanderer in an air raid, but that's only the surface You're less  
to—inside."

He looked at her, astonished It was true, he had not known it,  
not admitted it to himself He wondered at her power of obser-  
vation. She had seen little of him in these last few months He had  
enter

ought  
w he  
a cha  
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sitive  
in he

He never suspected her of experiencing.

"I was not aware of it," he said

"It's quite becoming dear—and astonishing, since you've been  
running such a terribly difficult time"

He wondered whether this was intended as a question She paused,  
if waiting for an answer, but she did not press it and went on  
ly

"I know you're having all sorts of trouble at the mills—and then  
the political situation is getting to be ominous, isn't it? If they pass  
the laws they're talking about, it will hit you pretty hard, won't  
it?"

"Yes. It will. But that is a subject which is of no interest to you,  
isn't it?"

"Oh, but it is!" She raised her head and looked straight at him,  
before a look of  
to solve it. "It  
of any possible

He wondered, for the first time, whether her spite, her sarcasm,  
his cowardly manner of delivering insults under the protection of a  
title, were not the cover of what he had always taken them to  
of despair, not a  
own pain, a de-  
pica—so that the

the hunted, the evasive in her manner, the thing begging to be  
understood, was not the open malice, but the hidden love He  
thought of it, aghast. It made his guilt greater than he had ever  
contemplated

"If we're talking politics, Henry. I had an amusing thought."



... of ... a ... to a ...? Do you mind if I

transcontinental deals no rails no bridges Not even the political situation I just want to chatter like a woman about perfectly unimportant things"

"Go ahead

"Henry there's no better way to stop me in there?" She had a air of helpless appealing sincerity "What can I say after that? Suppose I wanted to tell you about the new novel which Bald Dubank is writing—he is dedicating it to me—would that interest you?"

"If it's the truth you want—not in the least"

She laughed And if it's not the truth that I want?"

"Then I wouldn't know what to say" he answered—and felt a rush of blood to his brain tight as a slap realizing suddenly the double infamy of a lie uttered in protestation of honesty he had said it sincerely but it implied a boast to which he had no right no longer Why would you want it if it's not the truth?" he asked "What for?"

"Now you see *that's* the cruelty of conscientious people You wouldn't understand it—would you?—if I answered that real devotion consists of being willing to lie cheat and fake in order to make another person happy—to create for him the reality he wants, if he doesn't like the one that exists"

No he said slowly I wouldn't understand it"

"It's really very simple If you tell a beautiful woman that she is beautiful what have you given her? It's no more than a fact and she has cost you nothing But if you tell an ugly woman that she is beautiful you offer her the great homage of corrupting the concept of beauty To love a woman for her virtues is meaningless She has earned it it's a payment not a gift But to love her for her vices is a real gift unearned and undeserved To love her for her vices is to defile all virtue for her sake—and *that* is a real tribute of love because you sacrifice your conscience, your reason, your integrity your invaluable self-esteem"

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"What's love darling if it's not self sacrifice?" she went on lightly in the tone of a drawing room discussion "What's self sacrifice unless one sacrifices that which is one's most precious and most important? But I don't expect you to see that Puritan like you That's all right You'd let the whole world see your self of yours with a simple ashamed"

He said slowly his voice oddly strained and solemn "I have never claimed to be immaculate"

He stood looking at her as if it took all of his effort to keep his eyes directed at her face, to keep seeing her, to endure the sight. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Darling, there are so many things you could guess by yourself, if you really wished to know what I want. For instance if you have been avoiding me so blatantly for months, wouldn't I want to know the reason?"

"I have been very busy."

She shrugged. "A wife expects to be the first concern of her husband's existence. I didn't know that when you swore to forsake all others, it didn't include blast furnaces."

She came closer and, with an amused smile that seemed to mock them both, she slipped her arms around him.

It was the swift, instinctive, ferocious gesture of a young bride when at the unrequested contact of a whore—the gesture with which he tore her arms off his body and threw her aside.

With a start of his own reaction, she stood there, bewildered, with no calculations she had

made, a voice of sincerity

she did not answer.

"I'm sorry. It's just that I'm very tired," he added, his voice less clear. He was broken by the triple lie, one part of which was a disloyalty he could not bear to face, it was not the disloyalty to Lillian.

She gave a brief chuckle. "Well, if that's the effect your work has on you, I may come to approve of it. Do forgive me. I was merely trying to do my duty. I thought that you were a sensualist who'd never rise above the instincts of an animal in the gutter. I'm not one of those bitches who belong in it." She was snapping the words off, absently, without thinking. Her mind was on a question mark, hanging over every possible answer.

It was her last sentence that made him face her suddenly, face her simply, directly, not as one on the defensive any longer. "Lillian, what purpose do you live for?" he asked.

"What a crude question! No enlightened person would ever ask

"Well, what is it that enlightened people do with their lives?"

"Perhaps they do not attempt to do anything. That is their enlightenment."

"What do they do with their time?"

"They certainly don't spend it on manufacturing plumbing pipes."

"Tell me, why do you keep making those cracks?" I know that you

show contempt for the plumbing pipes. You've made that clear long

ago. Your contempt means nothing to me. Why keep repeating it?"

He wondered why this hit her; he did not know in what manner

it hit her. He knew that it did. He wondered why he felt with

certainty that that had been the right thing to say.

She asked her voice dry What's the purpose of the sudden questionaire?

He answered simply I'd like to know whether there's anything that you really want If there is I'd like to give it to you if I can.

"You'd like to buy it? That's all you know—paying for things. You get off easily don't you? No it's not as simple as that What I want is non material

What is it?

"You

How do you mean that Lilian? You don't mean it in the gutter sense."

No not in the gutter sense."

"How then?

She was at the door she turned she raised her head to look at him

never would want to leave him and he would never have the right to leave—the thought that he owed her at least the feeble recognition of sympathy of respect for a feeling he could neither understand nor return—the knowledge that he could summon nothing for her except contempt a strange total unreasoning contempt, impervious to

...ug only the thought that he was winning bear anything—leaving him in a state which was both tense and peace—because he lay in bed his face pressed to the pillow thinking of Dagny of her slender sensitive body stretched beside him trembling under the touch of his fingers He wished she were back in New York If she were he would have gone there now at once in the middle of the night.

Eugene Lawson sat at his desk as if it were the control panel of a bomber plane commanding a continent below But he forgot it a times and slouched down his muscles going slack inside his suit as if he were pouting at the world His mouth was the one part of his face which he could not pull tight at any time it was uncomfortably prominent in his lean face attracting the eyes of any listener when he spoke the movement ran through his lower lip twisting the moist flesh into extraneous contortions of its own

"I am not ashamed of it" said Eugene Lawson "Miss Taggart I want you to know that I am not ashamed of my past career as president of the Community National Bank of Madison"

"I haven't made any reference to shame" said Dagny coldly every that

Company which—

"I shall be glad to answer any questions I have nothing to hide  
My conscience is clear If you thought that the subject was embar

any were perfectly good men They were a perfectly sound risk  
—though of course, I am speaking in human terms not in the terms  
of cold cash, which you are accustomed to expect from bankers I  
granted them the loan for the purchase of that factory, because  
they needed the money If people needed money, that was enough  
for me Need was my standard, Miss Taggart Need, not greed My  
father and grandfather built up the Community National Bank just  
to amass a fortune for themselves I placed their fortune in the  
service of a higher ideal I did not sit on piles of money and demand  
collateral from poor people who needed loans The heart was my  
collateral Of course, I do not expect anyone in this materialistic  
country to understand me The rewards I got were not of a kind that  
people of your class, Miss Taggart, would appreciate The people  
who used to sit in front of my desk at the bank, did not sit as you  
do, Miss Taggart They were humble, uncertain, worn with care,  
dread to speak My rewards were the tears of gratitude in their  
eyes, the trembling voices, the blessings, the woman who kissed my  
hand when I granted her a loan she had begged for in vain every-  
where else "

"Will you please tell me the names of the men who owned the  
motor factory?"

"That factory was a part of the system of which I  
was  
for

"Certainly I knew them all It was men that interested me, not  
machines I was concerned with the human side of industry, not the  
cash-register side "

She leaned eagerly across the desk "Did you know any of the  
engineers who worked there?"

"The engineers? No, no I was much more democratic than that.  
It is the real workers that interested me The common men They all  
knew me by sight I used to come into the shops and they would  
wave and shout, 'Hello, Gene' That's what they called me—Gene  
But I'm sure this is of no interest to you It's past history Now if  
you really came to Washington in order to talk to me about your  
railroad"—he straightened up briskly the bomber plane pose re-  
turning—"I don't know whether I can promise you any special  
consideration, inasmuch as I must hold the national welfare above  
any private privileges or interests which—"

"I didn't come to talk to you about my railroad " she said looking  
at him in bewilderment "I have no desire to talk to you about my  
railroad "

"No?" He sounded disappointed

"No I came for information about the motor factory Could  
possibly recall the names of of the engineers who worked there

I don't believe I ever inquired about their names. I wasn't concerned with the parasites of office and laboratory. I was concerned with the real workers—the men of calloused hands who keep a factory going. They were my friends."

"Can you give me a few of their names? Any names of anyone who worked there?"

My dear Miss Taggart it was so long ago, there were thousands of them. How can I remember?"

"Can't you recall one, any one?"

I certainly cannot. So many people have always filled my life that I can't be expected to recall individual drops in the ocean."

Were you familiar with the production of that factory? With the kind of work they were doing—or planning?"

Certainly. I took a personal interest in all my investments. I went to inspect that factory very often. They were doing exceedingly well. They were accomplishing wonders. The workers' housing conditions were the best in the country. I saw lace curtains at every window and flowers on the window sills. Every home had a plot of ground for a garden. They had built a new schoolhouse for the children."

Did you know anything about the work of the factory's research laboratory?"

Yes, yes, they had a wonderful research laboratory, very advanced, very dynamic, with forward vision and great plans."

Do you remember hearing anything about any plan to produce a new type of motor?"

Items "

She turned away, not to see the damp movements of his mouth. A chunk of stone with a pedestal on a corner of the office—arms stood in a niche, mathematical detail like the the wall.

"Therefore, if you're thinking of your railroad, Miss Taggart, as of course you are in view of certain possible developments—must point out to you that although the welfare of the country, my first consideration to which I would not hesitate to sacrifice anyone's profits, still I have never closed my ears to a plea of mercy and—"

She looked at him and understood what it was that he wanted from her, what sort of motive kept him going.

"I don't wish to discuss my railroad," she said, fighting to keep her voice monotonously flat while she wanted to scream in revulsion. "Anything you have to say on the subject, you will please say it to my brother, Mr. James Taggart."

"I'd think that at a time like this you wouldn't want to pass a rare opportunity to plead your case before—"

"Have you preserved any records pertaining to the motor factory?"

sat straight, her hands clasped tight together.

"What records? I believe I told you that I lost everything I owned when the bank collapsed." His body had gone slack once more, interest had vanished. "But I do not mind. What I lost was material wealth. I am not the first man in history to suffer for ideal. I was defeated by the selfish greed of those around me. I couldn't establish a system of brotherhood and love in just one small state, amidst a nation of profit-seekers and dollar-grubbers. Was not my fault. But I won't let them beat me. I am not to be stopped. I am fighting—on a wider scale—for the privilege of serving my fellow men. Records, Miss Taggart? The record I left, when I departed from Madison, is inscribed in the hearts of the poor, who had never had a chance before."

She did not want to utter a single unnecessary word, but she could not stop herself. She kept seeing the figure of the old charwoman rubbing the steps. "Have you seen that section of the country yet?" she asked.

"It's not my fault!" he yelled. "It's the fault of the rich who still have money, but wouldn't sacrifice it to save my bank and the people of Wisconsin! You can't blame me! I lost everything!"

"Mr. Lawson," she said with effort, "do you perhaps recall the name of the man who headed the corporation that owned the factory? The corporation to which you lent the money. It was called amalgamated Service, wasn't it? Who was its president?"

"Oh, him? Yes, I remember him. His name was Lee Hunsacker. A very worthwhile young man, who's taken a terrible beating."

"Where is he now? Do you know his address?"

"Why—I believe he's somewhere in Oregon. Grangeville, Oregon. My secretary can give you his address. But I don't see of what interest . . . Miss Taggart, if what you have in mind is to try to stop Mr. Wesley Mouch, let me tell you that Mr. Mouch attaches a great deal of weight to my opinion in matters affecting such issues as railroads and other—"

"I have no desire to see Mr. Mouch," she said, rising.

"But then, I can't understand. What, really, was your purpose in coming here?"

"I am trying to find a certain man who used to work for the twentieth Century Motor Company."

"Why do you wish to find him?"

"I want him to work for my railroad."

He spread his arms wide, looking incredulous and slightly impatient. "At such a moment, when crucial issues hang in the balance, you choose to waste your time on looking for some one to employ? Believe me, the fate of your railroad depends on Mr. Mouch much more than on any employee you ever find."

"Good day," she said.

She had . . . and high. "You

nothing for myself I've never sought anything for myself Miss Torgart I can proudly say that in all of my life I have never made profit'

Her voice was quiet steady and solemn

"Mr Lawson I think I should let you know that of all the statements a man can make *that* is the one I consider most despicable

"I never had a chance!" said Lee Hunsacker

He sat in the middle of the kitchen, at a table cluttered with papers He needed a shave his shirt needed laundering It was his to judge his age the swollen flesh of his face looked smooth and blank untouched by experience, the graying hair and filmy eyes looked worn by exhaustion he was forty two

Nobody ever gave me a chance I hope they're satisfied with what they've made of me But don't think that I don't know it. I know I was cheated out of my birthright Don't let them put on any more of these humbug stories"

among the bleak roofs and naked trees of a place that was a country and could never quite become a town Dusk and darkness seemed soaked into the walls of the kitchen A pile of breakfast dishes lay in the sink a pot of stew simmered on the stove emitting steam with the greasy odor of cheap meat a dusty newspaper writer stood among the papers on the table.

"The Twentieth Century Motor Company" said Lee Hunsacker "was one of the most illustrious names in the history of American industry I was the president of that company I owned that factory But they wouldn't give me a chance

'You were not the president of the Twentieth Century Motor Company were you? I believe you headed a corporation called

backwoods garage mechanic—did you know that that's how it started?—without any background at all My family once belonged to the New York Four Hundred My grandfather was a member of the national legislature It's not my fault that my father could not afford to give me a car of my own when he sent me to school All the other boys had cars My family name was just as good as any theirs When I went to college—" He broke off abruptly "What newspaper did you say you're from?"

She had given him her name she did not know why she now felt glad that he had not recognized it and why she preferred not to enlighten him I did not say I was from a newspaper she answered "I need some information on that motor factory for a private use of my own not for publication"

"Oh" He looked disappointed. He went on sullenly, as if she were guilty of a deliberate offense against him. "I thought maybe you were for an advance interview because I'm writing my autobiography." He pointed to the papers on the table. "And what I intend to do is plenty I intend—Oh, hell!" he said suddenly, remembering nothing.

He rushed to the stove, lifted the lid off the pot and went through motions of stirring the stew, hatefully, paying no attention to his performance. He flung the wet spoon down on the stove, letting grease drip into the gas burners, and came back to the table.

"Yeah, I'll write my autobiography if anybody ever gives me a chance," he said. "How can I concentrate on serious work when this is the sort of thing I have to do?" He jerked his head at the stove. "Heads huh! Those people think that just because they took me in, they can exploit me like a Chinese coolie! Just because I had no other place to go. They have it easy, those good old friends of mine. Never lifts a finger around the house, just sits in his store all day, lousy little two-bit stationery store—can it compare in importance with the book I'm writing? And she goes out shopping and asks me to watch her damn stew for her. She knows that a writer needs peace and concentration, but does she care about that? Do you know what she did today?" He leaned confidentially across the table, resting at the dishes in the sink. "She went to the market and left the breakfast dishes there and said she'd do them later. I know what she wanted. She expected me to do them. Well, I'll fool her. I leave them just where they are."

"Would you allow me to ask you a few questions about the motor story?"

"Don't imagine that that motor factory was the only thing in my life. I'd held many important positions before. I was prominently connected, at various times, with enterprises manufacturing surgical appliances, paper containers, men's hats and vacuum cleaners. Of course, that sort of stuff didn't give me much scope. But the motor story—that was my big chance. That was what I'd been waiting for."

"How did you happen to acquire it?"

"It was a long time ago. The factory

we scraped up a little money. But we didn't have enough. We needed a loan to help us out and give us a start. It was a perfectly safe bet, we were young men embarking on great careers full of vigor and hope for the future. But do you think anybody gave us any encouragement? They did not. Not those greedy,



nothing for myself I've never sought anything for myself Miss Taggart I can proudly say that in all of my life I have never made a profit!"

Her voice was quiet, steady and solemn.

Mr. Lawson I think I should let you know that of all the statements a man can make *that is the one I consider most despicable*."

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nds at her  
k at all" E

Beyond the window the light of noon looked like grayish dusk among the bleak roofs and naked trees of a place that was a country and could never quite become a town. Dusk and darkness seemed soaked into the walls of the kitchen. A pile of breakfast dishes lay in the sink, a pot of stew simmered on the stove emitting steam with the greasy odor of cheap meat, a dusty typewriter stood among the papers on the table.

"The Twentieth Century Motor Company," said Lee Hunsacker, "was one of the most illustrious names in the history of American industry. I was the president of that company. I owned that factory. But they wouldn't give me a chance."

"You were not the president of the Twentieth Century Motor Company were you? I believe you headed a corporation called Amalgamated Service?"

"Yes yes but it's the same thing. We took over their factory. We were going to do just as well as they did. Better. We were just as important. Who the hell was Jed Starnes anyway? Nothing but a backwoods garage mechanic—did you know that that's how he started?—without any background at all. My family once belonged to the New York Four Hundred. My grandfather was a member of the national legislature. It's not my fault that my father couldn't afford to give me a car of my own, when he sent me to school. All the other boys had cars. My family name was just as good as any of theirs. When I went to college— He broke off abruptly. "What newspaper did you say you're from?"

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away!

"Don't imagine that that motor factory was the only one in my mind. He was a man of a very Of a motor waiting.

"How did you happen to acquire it?"  
"It was meant for me. It was my dream come true. The factory was then. He was a man of a very run it into but there company went body wanted eat factory, is that had p I wanted, few friends and we formed the Amalgamated Service Corporation and we scraped up a little money. But we didn't have enough we needed a loan to help us out and give us a start. It was a perfectly nice bet, we were young men embarking on great careers full of happiness and hope for the future. But do you anybody give in any encouragement? They did not."



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"They can exploit me like a Chinese coolie! Just because I had no other place to go. The boys there and old friends of mine

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"It was meant for me. It was my dream come true. The factory

earnestness and hope for the future. But do you think it gave me any encouragement? They did not. Not those greedy,



These were the things Dagny had heard about Midas Mulligan, she had never met him Seven years ago Midas Mulligan had vanished. He left his home one morning and was never heard from again. On the next day, the depositors of the Mulligan Bank in Chicago received notices requesting that they withdraw their funds, because the bank was closing. In the investigations that followed, it was learned that Mulligan had planned the closing in advance and in minute detail, his employees were merely carrying out his instructions. It was the most orderly run on a bank that the country ever witnessed. Every depositor received his money down to the last fraction of interest due. All of the bank's assets had been sold piecemeal to various financial institutions. When the books were balanced, it was found that they balanced perfectly, the penny, nothing was left over, the Mulligan Bank had been wiped out.

No clue was ever found to Mulligan's motive to his personal fate or to the many millions of his personal fortune. The man and the fortune were lost. No one had had

he had no family, no friends. His servants knew nothing. He had left his home that morning as usual and did not come back, that was all.

There was—Dagny had thought uneasily for years—a quality of the impossible about Mulligan's disappearance. It was as if a New York skyscraper had vanished one night, leaving nothing behind but a vacant lot on a street corner. A man like Mulligan and a fortune such as he had taken along with him could not stay hidden anywhere. A skyscraper could not get lost. It would be seen rising above any plain or forest chosen for its hiding place. Were it destroyed even its pile of rubble could not remain unnoticed. But Mulligan had gone—and in the seven years since in the mass of rumors, guesses, theories, Sunday supplement stories and eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen him in every part of the world no clue to a plausible explanation had ever been discovered.

Among the stories, there was one so preposterously out of character that Dagny believed it to be true. Nothing in Mulligan's nature could have given anyone ground to invent it. It was said that the last person to see him on the spring morning of his disappearance was an old woman who sold flowers on a Chicago street corner by the Mulligan Bank. She related that he stopped and bought a bunch of the year's first bluebells. His face was the happiest face she had ever seen, he had the look of a youth starting out on a great, unobstructed vision of life lying open before him. The marks of pain and tension, the sediment of years upon a human face had been wiped off, and what remained was only joyous expectancy and peace. He picked up the flowers as if on a sudden impulse and he winked at the old woman as if he had some thing to share with her. He said, "Do you know how much

I've always loved it—being alive?' She stared at him, bewildered, and  
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he  
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when nobody had ever given me a chance at anything <sup>his</sup>  
did he lend money to others but not to me? It was plain discrimina-  
tion. H.

record  
cart, is

if a lot of ignorant grocers refused to co-operate with me <sup>and</sup>  
the paper containers By what right did he pass judgment on my  
ability? Why did my plans for my own future have to depend upon  
the arbitrary opinion of a selfish monopolist? I wasn't going to  
stand for that I wasn't going to take it lying down I brought suit  
against him "

"You did *what*?"

"Oh yes, he said proudly, 'I brought suit. I'm sure it would  
seem strange in some of your hidebound Eastern states, but the  
state of Illinois had a very humane, very progressive law under  
which I could sue him I must say it was the first case of its  
kind <sup>in my</sup> for w  
to a  
ple  
hat peo  
against

any person in any matter involving his livelihood <sup>as we</sup>  
to protect day laborers and such, but it applied to me and my  
partners as well, didn't it? So we went to court, and we testified  
about the bad breaks we'd all had in the past, and I quote  
Mulligan saying that I couldn't even own a vegetable pushcart and  
we proved that all the members of the Amalgamated Service cor-  
poration had no prestige no credit no way to make a living—and  
therefore, the purchase of the motor factory was our only chance  
of livelihood—and, therefore, Midas Mulligan had no right to  
discriminate against us—and, therefore, we were entitled to demand  
a loan from him under the law Oh, we had a perfect case all right  
but the man who presided at the trial was Judge Narragansett, one  
of those old fashioned monks of the bench who thinks like  
a mathematician and never feels the human side of anything I  
just sat there all through the trial like a marble statue—like one  
of those blindfolded marble statues At the end, he instructed the  
jury to bring in a verdict in favor of Midas Mulligan—and he said  
some very harsh things about me and my partners But we appealed  
to a higher court—and the higher court reversed the verdict and  
ordered Mulligan to give us the loan on our terms He had the  
in which to comply, but before the three months were

Something happened that nobody can figure out and he vanished into thin air he and his bank. There wasn't an extra penny left of that bank to collect our lawful claim. We wasted a lot of money on detectives trying to find him—as who didn't?—but we gave it up."

No—thought Dagny—no apart from the sickening feeling it gave her this case was not much worse than any of the other things that Midas Mulligan had borne for years. He had taken many losses under laws of a similar justice under rules and edicts that had cost him much larger sums of money he had borne them and fought and worked the harder it was not likely that this case had broken him.

"What happened to Judge Narragansett?" she asked involuntarily and wondered what subconscious connection had made her ask it. She knew little about Judge Narragansett but she had heard and remembered his name because it was a name that belonged so exclusively to the North American continent. Now she realized suddenly that she had heard nothing about him for years.

"Oh, he retired," said Lee Hunsacker.

"He did?" The question was almost a gasp.

"Yeah."

"When?"

"Oh about six months later."

"What did he do after he retired?"

"I don't know. I don't think anybody's heard from him since."

He wondered why she looked frightened. Part of the fear she felt was that she could not name its reason either. "Please tell me about the motor factory," she said with effort.

"Well Eugene Lawson of the Community National Bank in Madison finally gave us a loan to buy the factory—but he was just a messy cheapskate he didn't have enough money to see us through he couldn't help us when we went bankrupt. It was not our fault. We had everything against us from the start. How could we run a factory when we had no railroad? Weren't we entitled to a railroad? I tried to get them to reopen their branch line but those damn people at Taggart Trans—" He stopped. "Say are you by any chance one of those Taggarts?"

"I am the Operating Vice President of Taggart Transcontinental."

For a moment, he stared at her in blank stupor she saw the struggle of fear, obsequiousness and hatred in his filmy eyes. The result was a sudden snarl. "I don't need any of you big shots! Don't think I'm going to be afraid of you. Don't expect me to beg for a job. I'm not asking favors of anybody. I bet you're not used to hearing people talk to you this way are you?"

"Mr. Hunsacker I will appreciate it very much if you will give me the information I need about the factory."

"You're a little late getting interested. What's the matter? Your conscience bothering you? You people let Jed Starnes grow filthy rich on that factory but you wouldn't give us a break. It was the same factory. We did everything he did. We started right in manufacturing the particular type of motor that had been his business."





air of a small room had the same look. The smell came from  
the floor. The floor was at the feet

voice had the even dripping monotone of rain.

"I can't answer the kind of questions you're asking, my girl. The research laboratory? The engineers? Why should I remember anything about them? It was my father who was concerned with such matters, not I. My father was an evil man who cared for nothing but business. He had no time for love, only for money. My brothers and I lived on a different plane. Our aim was not to produce gadgets, but to do good. We brought a great new plan into the factory. It was eleven years ago. We were defeated by the greed, the selfishness and the base animal nature of men. It was the eternal conflict between spirit and matter, between soul and body. They would not renounce their bodies, which was all we asked of them. I do not remember any of those men. I do not care to remember.

The engineers? I believe it was they who started the hemophilia. Yes, that is what I said, the hemophilia—the slow leak—the loss of blood that cannot be stopped. They ran first. They deserted us, one after another. Our plan? We put into practice that noble historical precept: From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. Everybody in the factory, from charwomen to president, received the same salary—the barest minimum necessary. Twice a year we all gathered in a mass meeting where every person presented his claim for what he believed to be his needs. We voted on every claim, and the will of the majority established every person's need and every person's ability. The income of the factory was distributed accordingly. Rewards were based on need, and penalties on ability. Those whose needs were voted to be the greatest, received the most. Those who had not produced as much as the vote said they could, were fined and had to pay the fines by working overtime without pay. That was our plan. It was based on the principle of selflessness. It required men to be motivated, not by personal gain, but by love for their brothers."

Dagny heard a cold, unplaceable voice saying somewhere within her: "Remember it—remember it well—it is not often that one can see pure evil—look at it—remember—and some day you'll find the words to name its essence." She heard it through the screaming of other voices that cried in helpless violence. "It's nothing—I've heard it before—I'm hearing it everywhere—it's nothing but the same old tripe—why can't I stand it?—I can't stand it—I can't stand it!"

"What's the matter with you, my girl? Why did you jump up like that? Why are you shaking?" "What? Do speak louder. I can't hear you." "How did the plan work out? I do not care to discuss it. Things became very ugly indeed and went forer every year. It has cost me my faith in human nature. In four

years a plan conceived not by the cold calculations of the mind, but by the pure love of the heart was brought to an end in the sordid mess of policemen lawyers and bankruptcy proceedings. But I have seen my error and I am free of it I am through with the world of machines manufacturers and money the world enslaved by matter I am learning the emancipation of the spirit, as revealed in the great secrets of India the release from bondage to flesh the victory over physical nature, the triumph of the spirit over matter

Through the blinding white glare of anger Dagny was seeing a long strip of concrete that had been a road with weeds rising from its cracks and the figure of a man contorted by a hand plow

But my girl I said that I do not remember But I do not know their names I do not know any names I do not know what sort of adventurers my father may have had in that laboratory! Don't you hear me? I am not accustomed to being questioned in such manner and Don't keep repeating it Don't you know any words but engineer? Don't you hear me at all? What's the matter with you? I—I don't like your face you're Leave me alone I don't know who you are I've never hurt you I'm an old woman don't look at me like that!

Stand back! Don't come near me or I'll call for help! I'll Oh yes yes I know that head of the laboratory Yes William Hastings I remember He quit the day after we introduced the plan He was the second man to quit us No No I don't remember who was the first He wasn't anybody important

The woman who opened the door had graying hair and a poised distinguished look of grooming it took Dagny a few seconds to realize that her garment was only a simple cotton housedress

"May I see Mr William Hastings?" asked Dagny

voice like a warning Her manner was courteous but she did not smile

It was a modest home in the suburbs of an industrial town. Bare tree branches cut across the bright cold blue of the sky on the top of the rise that led to the house The walls of the living room were silver gray sunlight hit the crystal stand of a lamp with white shade beyond an open door a breakfast nook was papered in red-dotted white

"Were you acquainted with my husband in business, Miss Taggart?"

"No I have never met Mr Hastings But I should like to speak to him on a matter of business of crucial importance"

"My husband died five years ago Miss Taggart."

Jaggy closed her eyes; the dull, sinking shock contained the elusions she did not have to make in words. This, then, had been the man she was seeking, and Rearden had been right, this was why the motor had been left unclaimed on a junk pile. "I'm sorry," she said, both to Mrs. Hastings and to herself. Hastings' face held sadness, a grave look of firm-

"Mrs. Hastings, would you permit me to ask you a few questions?"

"Certainly. Please sit down."

"Did you have some knowledge of your husband's scientific work?"

"Very little. None, really. He never discussed it at home."

"He was, at one time, chief engineer of the Twentieth Century Motor Company?"

"Yes. He had been employed by them for eighteen years."

"I'm afraid I shall never learn it now. I know why he left the factory was because of an outrageous scheme which the heirs of Jed Rues established there. He would not work on such terms or for such people. But there was something else. I've always felt that something happened at Twentieth Century Motors, which he would not tell me."

"I'm extremely anxious to know any clue you may care to give."

"I have no clue to it. I've tried to guess and given up. I cannot understand or explain it. But I know that something happened when my husband left Twentieth Century. We came here and he took a job as head of the engineering department of Acme Motors. It was a growing, successful concern at the time. It gave my husband the kind of work he liked. He was not a person prone to inter conflicts, he had always been sure of his actions and at peace with himself. But for a whole year after we left Wisconsin he acted as if he were tortured by something, as if he were struggling with a personal problem he could not solve. At the end of that year, he came to me one morning and told me that he had resigned from Acme Motors. That he was retiring and would not work anywhere else. He loved his work, it was his whole life. Yet he looked dim, self-confident and happy for the first time since we had come here. He asked me not to question him about the reason of his decision. I didn't question him and I didn't object. We had then some, we had our savings, we had enough to live on for the rest of our days. I never learned his reason. We were here, quietly and very happily. He seemed to be at peace and contentment. He had an odd serenity of spirit I never seen in him before. There was nothing strange."

havior or activity—except that at times very rarely he went out without telling me where he went or whom he saw. In the last two years of his life he went away for one month each summer he did not tell me where. Otherwise he lived as he always had. He studied a great deal and he spent his time on engineering research of his own working in the basement of our house. I don't know what he did with his notes and experimental models. I found no trace of them in the basement after his death. He died five years ago of a heart ailment from which he had suffered for some time.

Dagny asked hopelessly: Did you know the nature of his experiments?

No. I know very little about engineering."

"Did you know any of his professional friends or co-workers who might have been acquainted with his research?"

No. When he was at Twentieth Century Motors he worked such long hours that we had very little time for ourselves and we spent it together. We had no social life at all. He never brought his associates to the house.

When he was at Twentieth Century did he ever mention to you a motor he had designed, an entirely new type of motor that could have changed the course of all industry?

"A motor? Yes. Yes, he spoke of it several times. He said it was an invention of incalculable importance. But it was not he who designed it. It was the invention of a young assistant of his."

She saw the expression on Dagny's face and added slowly and quietly without reproach, merely in sad amusement: "I see."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Dagny, realizing that her emotion had shown to her face and become as obvious as a cry of relief.

It's quite all right. I understand. It's the inventor of that motor that you're interested in. I don't know whether he is still alive, but at least I have no reason to think that he isn't."

"I'd give half my life to know that he is—and to find him. It is as important as that Mrs. Hastings. Who is he?"

"I don't know. I don't know his name or anything about him. I never knew any of the men on my husband's staff. He told me only that he had a young engineer who some day would upend the world. My husband did not care for anything in people except ability. I think this was the only man he ever loved. He didn't say so, but I could tell it just by the way he spoke of this young assistant. I remember—the day he told me that the motor was completed—how his voice sounded when he said: And he's only twenty-six. This was about a month before the death of Jed Starnes. He never mentioned the motor or the young engineer after that."

"You don't know what became of the young engineer?"

"No."

You can't suggest any way to find him?

No."

"You have no clue, no lead to help me learn his name?"

"None. Tell me, was that motor extremely valuable?"

"More valuable than any estimate I could give you."

It's strange, because, you see, I thought of it once, some years ago we'd left Wisconsin, and I asked my husband what had become of that invention he'd said was so great, what would be done with it. He looked at me very oddly and answered, 'Nothing.' 'Why?'

He wouldn't tell me."

Can you remember anyone at all who worked at Twentieth Century? Anyone who knew that young engineer? Any friend of

his, I . . . Wait! Wait, I think I can give you a lead. I can tell you where to find one friend of his. I don't even know that man's name, either, but I know his address. It's an odd story. Let me explain how it happened. One evening—about two years ago—we'd come here—my husband was going out and I needed our car that night, so he asked me to pick him up after dinner at the restaurant of the railroad station. He did not tell me with whom he was having dinner. When I drove up to the station, I saw him standing outside the restaurant with two men. One of them was young and tall. The other was elderly, he looked very distinguished. I could still recognize those men anywhere, they had the kind of faces one doesn't forget. My husband saw me and left them. I walked away toward the station platform, there was a train coming. My husband pointed after the young man and said, 'Did you see him? That's the boy I told you about.' 'The one who's the great maker of motors?' 'The one who was'."

And he told you nothing else?"

Nothing else. This was nine years ago. Last spring I went to see my brother who lives in Cheyenne. One afternoon, he took the car out for a long drive. We went up into pretty wild country, high in the Rockies, and we stopped at a roadside diner. There was a distinguished, gray haired man behind the counter. I kept looking at him while he fixed our sandwiches and coffee because I knew that I had seen his face before, but could not remember where. We drove on, we were miles away from the diner, when I remembered. You'd better go there. It's on Route 86, in the mountains, west of Cheyenne, near a small industrial settlement by Lennox Copper Foundry. It seems strange, but I'm certain that the cook in that diner is the man I saw at the railroad station with my husband's young idol."

The diner stood on the summit of a long, hard climb. Its glass

Waggy sat at the end of the counter, eating a hamburger sandwich. It was the best-cooked food she had ever tasted, the product of simple ingredients and of an unusual skill. Two workers finishing their dinner; she was waiting for them to depart. She studied the man behind the counter. He was slender and, he had an air of distinction that belonged in an

castle or in the inner office of a bank, but his peculiar quality came from the fact that he made the distinction seem appropriate here, behind the counter of a diner. He wore a cook's white jacket as if it were a full-dress suit. There was an expert competence in his manner of working, his movements were easy, intelligently economical. He had a lean face and gray hair that blended in tone with the cold blue of his eyes, somewhere beyond his look of courteous sternness, there was a note of humor, so faint that it vanished if one tried to discern it.

The two workers finished paid and departed, each leaving a dime for a tip. She watched the man as he removed their dishes, put the dimes into the pocket of his white jacket, wiped the counter working with swift precision. Then he turned and looked at her. It was an impersonal glance, not intended to invite conversation, but she felt certain that he had long since noted her New York suit, her high heeled pumps, her air of being a woman who did not waste her time. His cold, observant eyes seemed to tell her that he knew she did not belong here and that he was waiting to discover her purpose.

"How is business?" she asked.

"Pretty bad. They're going to close the Lennox Foundry next week, so I'll have to close soon, too, and move on." His voice was clear, impersonally cordial.

"Where to?"

"I haven't decided."

"What sort of thing do you have in mind?"

"I don't know. I'm thinking of opening a garage, if I can find the right spot in some town."

"Oh no! You're too good at your job to change it. You shouldn't want to be anything but a cook."

A strange, fine smile moved the curve of his mouth. "No?" he asked courteously.

"No! How would you like a job in New York? He looked at her, astonished. "I'm serious. I can give you a job on a big railroad, in charge of the dining-car department."

"May I ask why you should want to?"

She raised the hamburger sandwich in its white paper napkin. "There's one of the reasons."

"Thank you. What are the others?"

"I don't suppose you've lived in a big city, or you'd know how miserably difficult it is to find any competent men for any job whatever."

"I know a little about that."

"Well? How about it, then? Would you like a job in New York at ten thousand dollars a year?"

"No."

She had been carried away by the joy of discovering and rewarding ability. She looked at him silently, shocked. "I don't think you understood me," she said.

"I did."

"You're refusing an opportunity of this kind?"

"Yes"  
 "but why?"  
 "That is a personal matter."  
 "Why should you work like this, when you can have a better?"  
 "I am not looking for a better job."  
 "You don't want a chance to rise and make money?"  
 "No. Why do you insist?"  
 "Because I hate to see ability being wasted!"  
 He said slowly, intently, "So do I."  
 Something in the way he said it made her feel the bond of some  
 bound emotion which they held in common. It broke the dis-  
 tance that forbade her ever to call for help. "I'm so sick of them!"  
 His voice startled her. It was an involuntary cry. "I'm so hungry  
 for any sight of anyone who's able to do whatever it is he's doing!"  
 He pressed the back of her hand to her eyes, trying to dam  
 an outbreak of a despair she had not permitted herself to acknowl-  
 edge. She had not known the extent of it, nor how little of her  
 chance the quest had left her.  
 "I'm sorry," he said, his voice low. It sounded, not as an apology,  
 but as a statement of compassion.  
 He glanced up at him. He smiled, and she knew that the smile  
 intended to break the bond which he, too, had felt. The smile  
 had a trace of courteous mockery. He said, "But I don't believe  
 you came all the way from New York just to hunt for railroad  
 jobs in the Rockies."  
 "No. I came for something else." She leaned forward, both  
 arms braced firmly against the counter, feeling calm and in  
 control again, sensing a dangerous adversary. "Did you know,  
 about ten years ago, a young engineer who worked for the Twen-  
 tieth Century Motor Company?"  
 She counted the seconds of a pause, she could not define the  
 use of the way he looked at her, except that it was the look of  
 special attentiveness.  
 "Yes, I did," he answered.  
 "Could you give me his name and address?"  
 "What for?"  
 "It's crucially important that I find him."  
 "That man? Of what importance is he?"  
 "He is the most important man in the world."  
 "Really? Why?"  
 "Did you know anything about his work?"  
 "Yes."  
 "Did you know that he hit upon an idea of the most tremendous  
 consequence?"  
 He let a moment pass. "May I ask who you are?"  
 "Daggy Taggart. I'm the Vice Pres—"  
 "Yes, Miss Taggart. I know who you are."  
 He said it with impersonal deference. But he looked as if he  
 had found the answer to some special question in his mind and  
 was astonished any longer.



"Then you know that my interest is not idle" she said. "I'm in a position to give him the chance he needs and I'm prepared to pay anything he asks."

"May I ask what has aroused your interest in him?"

His motor

"How did you happen to know about his motor?"

"I found a broken remnant of it in the ruins of the Twentieth Century factory. Not enough to reconstruct it or to learn how it worked. But enough to know that it did work and that it's as good as dead."

"But now nothing is of any importance, except that I must find him. Don't ask me how I happened to come to you. You're the end of the trail. Tell me his name."

He had listened without moving, looking straight at her. The attentiveness of his eyes seemed to take hold of every word and store it carefully away, giving her no clue to his purpose. He did not move for a long time. Then he said "Give it up, Miss Taggart. You won't find him."

"What is his name?"

"I can tell you nothing about him."

"Is he still alive?"

"I can tell you nothing."

"What is your name?"

"Hugh Akston."

Through the blank seconds of recapturing her mind she told herself "You're hysterical. It's just a coincidence of names—while she knew in certainty a numb inexplicable terror that this was *the* Hugh Akston."

"Hugh Akston?" she stammered. "The philosopher? The last of the advocates of reason?"

"Why yes," he answered pleasantly. "Or the first of their turn."

He did not seem startled by her shock, but he seemed to find it unnecessary. His manner was simple almost friendly as if he felt no need to hide his identity and no resentment at its being discovered.

"I didn't think that any young person would recognize my name or attach any significance to it nowadays," he said.

"But what are you doing here? Her arm swept at the room. "This doesn't make sense."

"Are you sure?"

"What is it? A stunt? An experiment? A secret mission? Are you studying something for some special purpose?"

"No, Miss Taggart. I'm earning my living. The words and voice had the genuine simplicity of truth."

"Dr. Akston. I know it's inconceivable it's you. You're a philosopher, the greatest philosopher living, an immortal name. Why would you do this?"

"Because I am a philosopher Miss Taggart" he knew with certainty—even though she felt as if her capacity for understanding were gone—that she would get no help from him that questions were useless that he would give her no explanation neither of the inventor's fate nor of his

"Give it up Miss Taggart" he said quietly as if giving proof that he could guess her thoughts as she had known he would "It is a hopeless quest the more hopeless because you have no inkling of what an impossible task you have chosen to undertake I would spare you the strain of trying to devise some argument or plea that would make me give you the information you seek Take my word for it it can't be done You said I'm at the end of your trail It's a blind alley Miss Taggart Do not attempt to waste your money and effort on other more conventional methods of inquiry do not hire detectives They will learn nothing I may choose to ignore my warning but I think that you are a woman of high intelligence able to know that I know what I am saying Give it up The secret you are trying to solve involves something greater—much greater—than the invention of a motor by atmospheric electricity There is only one helpful suggestion that I can give you By the essence and nature of existence contradictions cannot exist If you find it inconceivable that an invention of genius should be abandoned among ruins and that a philosopher should wish to work as a cook in a diner—check your musings You will find that one of them is wrong"

She started she remembered that she had heard this before that it was Francisco who had said it And then she remembered that this man had been one of Francisco's teachers

"As you wish Dr Akston" she said "I won't attempt to question you about it But would you permit me to ask you a question on an entirely different subject?"

"Certainly"

"Dr Robert Stadler once told me that when you were at the trick Henry University you had three students who were your favorites and his three brilliant minds from whom you expected great future One of them was Francisco d'Anconia"

"Yes Another was Ragnar Danneskjold"

"Incidentally—this is not my question—who was the third?"

"His name would mean nothing to you He is not famous"

"Dr Stadler said that you and he were rivals over these three students because you both regarded them as your sons"

"Rivals? He lost them"

"Tell me are you proud of the way these three have turned out?"

He looked off into the distance at the dying fire of the sunset at the farthest rocks his face had the look of a father who watches his sons bleeding on a battlefield He answered

"More proud than I had ever hoped to be"

It was almost dark He turned sharply took a package of cigarettes from his pocket pulled out one cigarette but stopped, remembering her presence as if he had forgotten it for a moment,

and extended the package to her. She took a cigarette and he struck the brief flare of a match then shook it out, leaving only two small points of fire in the darkness of a glass room and of miles of mountains beyond it.

She rose paid her bill and said, "Thank you, Dr. Akston. I will not molest you with tricks or pleas. I will not hire detectives. But I think I should tell you that I will not give up. I must find the inventor of that motor. I will find him."

Not until the day when he chooses to find you—as he will." When she walked to her car, he switched on the lights in the diner. She saw the mailbox by the side of the road and noted the incredible fact that the name "Hugh Akston" stood written openly across it.

She had driven far down the winding road, and the lights of the diner were long since out of sight, when she noticed that she was enjoying the taste of the cigarette he had given her. It was different from any she had ever smoked before. She held the small remnant to the light of the dashboard, looking for the name of the brand. There was no name, only a trademark. Stamped in gold on the thin, white paper there stood the sign of the dollar.

She examined it curiously. She had never heard of that brand before. Then she remembered the old man at the cigar stand of the Taggart Terminal and smiled, thinking that this was a specimen for his collection. She stamped out the fire and dropped the butt into her handbag.

Train Number 57 was lined along the track, ready to leave for Wyatt Junction, when she reached Cheyenne, left her car at the garage where she had rented it, and walked out on the platform of the Taggart station. She had half an hour to wait for the east-bound main liner to New York. She walked to the end of the platform and leaned wearily against a lamppost. She did not want to be seen and recognized by the station employees, she did not want to talk to anyone. She needed rest. A few people stood in clusters on the half-deserted platform, animated conversations seemed to be going on and newspapers were more prominently in evidence than usual.

She looked at the lighted windows of Train Number 57—for a moment's relief in the sight of a victorious achievement. Train Number 57 was about to start down the track of the John Galt Line through the towns through the curves of the mountains, past the green signals where people had stood cheering and the valleys where rockets had risen to the summer sky. Twisted remnants of leaves now hung on the branches beyond the train's roof line, and the passengers wore furs and mufflers as they climbed aboard. They moved with the casual manner of a daily event, with the security of expecting a performance long since taken for granted. . . . We've done it—she thought—this much, at least, is done.

It was the chance conversation of two men somewhere behind her that came beating suddenly against her closed attention.

"But laws shouldn't be passed that way, so quickly."

"They're not laws, they're directives."



a rack pulled in opposite directions—it was Ellis Wyatt Wiping  
the rest, filling her consciousness, leaving no room for words  
time for wonder as a clear --

when he flung a glass to shatter against the wall

The only consciousness the pictures left her was the feeling of  
the approach of some unthinkable disaster, and the feeling that she  
had to outrun it. She had to reach Ellis Wyatt and stop him. She  
did not know what it was that she had to prevent. She knew only  
that she had to stop him.

And because, were she lying crushed under the ruins of a build-  
ing, were she torn by the bomb of an air raid, so long as she was  
still in existence she would know that action was man's foremost  
obligation, regardless of anything he feels—she was able to run  
down the platform and to see the face of the stationmaster who  
she had met before.

She stood, propped up by the walls of the booth, her eyes closed  
and listened to the dead whirl of metal which was the sound of  
bell ringing somewhere. It brought no answer. The bell kept coming  
in sudden spasms, like a drill going through her ear, through her  
body. She clutched the receiver as if, unheeded, it were still a form  
of contact. She wished the bell were louder. She forgot that the  
sound she heard was not the bell. She did not  
know that she was screaming  
heard the cold, reproachful  
does not answer."

She sat at the window of a coach of Train Number 57, and  
listened to the clicking of the wheels on the rails. The train was  
She sat, unresisting, her head against the window-pane. The  
luster of the windows was gone. It was her second day. She  
thought of the first time.

The bondholders, she thought, the bondholders of the John Galt  
Line—it was to her honor that they had entrusted their money, their  
saving and achievement of years, it was on her ability that they had  
staked it, it was on her work that they had relied and on their own  
and she had been made to betray them into a looters' trap. There  
would be no trains and no life-blood of freight, the John Galt Line had  
been only a drainpipe that had permitted Jim Taggart to make  
deal and to drain their wealth, unearned, into his pocket, in ex-  
change for letting others drain his railroad—the bonds of the John  
Galt Line, which, this morning, had been the proud guardians of  
their owners' security and future, had become in the space of an  
hour, scraps of paper that no one would buy, with no value, no  
future, no power, save the power to close the doors and stop the

is of the last hope of the country—and Taggart Transcon  
ital was not a living plant fed by blood it had worked to pro-  
but a cannibal of the moment, devouring the unborn children  
reatness

ic tax on Colorado she thought, the tax collected from Ellis  
it to pay for the livelihood of those whose job was to tie him  
make him unable to live, those who would stand on guard to see  
he got no trains, no tank cars no pipeline of Rearden Metal—  
Wyatt, stripped of the right of self-defense left without voice,  
out weapons, and worse made to be the tool of his own  
ruination, the supporter of his own destroyers the provider of  
food and of their weapons—Ellis Wyatt being choked with his  
bright energy turned against him as the noose—Ellis Wyatt  
had wanted to tap an unlimited source of shale oil and who  
e of a Second Renaissance. . .

■ sat bent over her head on her arms, slumped at the ledge of  
window—while the great curves of the green blue rail the  
stains the valleys, the new towns of Colorado went by in the  
new, unseen.

he sudden jolt of brakes on wheels threw her upright It was an  
bed led station and he had found it — it was a station was a dead

ping the platform.

the instant before she saw it and her scream cut the voices of  
crowd, she knew that she had known that which she was to see  
break between mountains, lighting the sky throwing a glow  
swayed on the roofs and walls of the station the hill of Wyatt  
was a solid sheet of flame

After, when they told her that Ellis Wyatt had vanished leaving  
ang behind but a board he had nailed to a post at the foot of the  
when she looked at his handwriting on the board she felt as if  
had almost known that these would be the words  
am leaving it as I found it Take over It's yours "

**Part 2**

**EITHER-OR**

## Chapter I THE MAN WHO BELONGED ON EARTH

Dr Robert Stadler paced his office, wishing he would not feel the cold.

Spring had been late in coming. Beyond the window, the dead gray of the hills looked like the smeared transition from the soiled white of the sky to the leaden black of the river. Once in a while a distant patch of hillside flared into a silver yellow that was almost green, then vanished. The clouds kept cracking for the width of a single sunray, then oozing closed again. It was not cold in the office, thought Dr Stadler, it was that view that froze the place.

It was not cold today, the chill was in his bones—he thought—the stored accumulation of the winter months, when he had had to be distracted from his work by an awareness of such a matter as inadequate heating and people had talked about conserving fuel. It was preposterous, he thought, this growing intrusion of the accidents of nature into the affairs of men. It had never mattered before, if a winter happened to be unusually severe, if a flood washed out a section of railroad track, one did not spend two weeks eating canned vegetables, if an electric storm struck some power station, an establishment such as the State Science Institute was not left without electricity for five days. Five days of silliness this winter, he thought, with the great laboratory motors stopped and unretrievable hours wiped out, when his staff had been working on problems that involved the heart of the universe. He wanted to

Feeling it was late—an astonishing matter—late for an appointment with him—Dr Floyd Ferris the valet of science who had always faced him in a manner that suggested an apology for having but one bit to take off.

This was outrageous weather for the month of May he thought looking down at the river, it was certainly the weather that made him feel as he did, not the book. He had placed the book in plain view on his desk, when he had noted that his reluctance to see it was more than mere revulsion, that it contained the emotion never to be admitted. He told himself that he had it on his desk, not because the book lay there, but merely



wanted to move feeling cold He paced the room trapped between the desk and the window He would throw that book in the ash can where it belonged he thought, just as soon as he had spoken to Dr Ferris

He watched the patch of green and sunlight on the distant hill the promise of spring in a world that looked as if no grass or bud would ever function again He smiled eagerly—and when the patch vanished he felt a stab of humiliation at his own eagerness

a collection of sentences that gave him exorbitant praise and garbled every thought he had expressed Closing the magazine he had felt what he was feeling now at the desertion of a sunray

All right—he thought turning away from the window—he would concede that attacks of loneliness had begun to strike him at times but it was a loneliness to which he was entitled it was hunger for the response of some living, thinking mind He was so tired of those people he thought in contemptuous bitterness he dealt with cosmic rays while they were unable to deal with an electric storm

He felt the sudden contraction of his mouth like a slap denying him the right to pursue this course of thought He was looking at the book on his desk Its glossy jacket was glaring and new It had been published two weeks ago But I had nothing to do with it— he screamed to himself the scream seemed wasted on a merciless silence nothing answered it no echo of forgiveness The title of the book's jacket was *Why Do You Think You Think?*

There was no sound in that courtroom silence within him: pity no voice of defense—nothing but the paragraphs which his great memory had reprinted on his brain

"Thought is a primitive superstition Reason is an irrational idea The childish notion that we are able to think has been mankind's costliest error

What you think you think is an illusion created by your glances your emotions and in the last analysis by the content of your stomach "

"That gray matter you're so proud of is like a mirror in an amusement park which transmits to you nothing but distorted signals from reality forever beyond your grasp "

"The more certain you feel of your rational conclusions the more certain you are to be wrong Your brain being an instrument of distortion the more active the brain the greater the distortion "

"The giants of the intellect whom you admire so much or taught you that the earth was flat and that the atom was the smallest particle of matter That is all exploded fallacy

"The more  
"Only the

tion that seeing is believing That which you see is the first thing  
disbelieve "

"A ... - 1-

ce of actual reality "

"The latest scientific discoveries—such as the tremendous achieve-  
ments of Dr Robert Stadler—have demonstrated conclusively that  
reason is incapable of dealing with the nature of the universe  
These discoveries have led scientists to contradictions which are  
impossible, according to the human mind, but which exist in reality  
Nevertheless If you have not yet heard it, my dear old fashioned  
friends, it has now been proved that the rational "is the insane "

"Do not expect consistency Everything is a contradiction of every-  
thing else Nothing exists but contradictions "

"Do not look for 'common sense' To demand 'sense' is the hall-  
mark of nonsense Nature does not make sense Nothing makes  
sense The only ... "

"Let us break the chains of the prejudice called Logic Are we  
going to be stopped by a syllogism?"

"So you think you're sure of your opinions? You cannot be sure  
of anything Are you going to endanger the harmony of your com-  
munity, your fellowship with your neighbors, your standing repu-  
tation, good name and financial security—for the sake of an illu-  
sion? For the sake of the mirage of thinking that you think? Are  
you going to run risks and court disasters—at a precarious time like  
this—by opposing the existing social order in the name of those  
imaginary notions of yours which you call your convictions? You  
say that you're sure you're right? Nobody is right, or ever can be  
You feel that the world around you is wrong? You have no means  
to know it. Everything is wrong in human eyes—so why fight it?  
Don't argue Accept. Adjust yourself Obey "

The book was written by Dr Floyd Ferris and published by the  
State Science Institute

"I had nothing to do with it!" said Dr Robert Stadler He stood  
tall by the side of his desk, with the uncomfortable feeling of  
having missed some beat of time of not knowing how long the  
preceding moment had lasted He had pronounced the words aloud  
in a tone of rancorous sarcasm directed at whoever had made him  
say it.

He shrugged Resting on the belief that self mockery is an act of  
virtue, the shrug was the emotional equivalent of the sentence  
You're Robert Stadler, don't act like a high-school neurotic life and  
down at his desk and pushed the book aside with the back  
hand.

Dr Floyd Ferris arrived half an hour late "Sorry," he  
my car broke down ~~the~~ the way from Washington

a hell of a time trying to find somebody to fix it—there's getting to be so damn few cars out on the road that half the service stations are closed

There was more annoyance than apology in his voice. He sat down without waiting for an invitation to do so.

Dr. Floyd Ferris would not have been noticed as particularly handsome in any other profession but in the one he had chosen was always described as "that good looking scientist." He was six feet tall and forty five years old but he managed to look taller, younger. He had an air of immaculate grooming and a ball of grace of motion but his clothes were severe, his suits being usually black or midnight blue. He had a finely traced mustache and smooth black hair made the Institute boys say that he used the shoe polish on both ends of him. He did not mind repeating in tone of a joke on himself that a movie producer once said he would cast him for the part of a titled European gigolo. He had begun his career as a biologist but that was forgotten long ago; he was far from as the Top Coordinator of the State Science Institute.

Dr. Stadler glanced at him with astonishment—the lack of apology was unprecedented—and said dryly, "It seems to me you are spending a great deal of your time in Washington."

"But Dr. Stadler wasn't I you who once paid me the compliment of calling me the watchdog of this Institute?" said Dr. Ferris pleasantly. "Isn't that my most essential duty?"

"A few of your duties seem to be accumulating right around here. Before I forget it would you mind telling me what's going on here about that oil shortage mess?"

He could not understand why Dr. Ferris' face tightened into an injured look. "You will permit me to say that this is unexpected and unwarranted," said Dr. Ferris in that tone of formality which conceals pain and reveals martyrdom. "None of the authorities involved have found cause for criticism. We have just submitted a detailed report on the progress of the work to date to the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources and Mr. Wesley Miller has expressed himself as satisfied. We have done our best on this project. We have heard no one else describe it as a mess, considering the difficulties of the terrain, the hazards of the fire, the fact that it has been only six months since we—"

"What are you talking about?" asked Dr. Stadler.

"The Wyatt Reclamation Project. Isn't that what you asked about?"

"No," said Dr. Stadler, "no. I—Wait a moment. Let me put this straight. I seem to recall something about this Institute being in charge of a reclamation project. What is it that you're reclaiming?"

"Oil," said Dr. Ferris. "The Wyatt oil fields."

"That was a fire, wasn't it? In Colorado? That was a long time ago."

"That was the man who set fire to his own oil well," said Dr. Ferris dryly. "I'm inclined to believe that that's a rumor created by public hysteria." "A rumor with some undesirable patriotic implications. I wouldn't put too much faith in those paper stories. Personally, I believe that it was an accident and Ellis Wyatt perished in the fire."



Why? For heavens sake don't tell me that those Wyatt field were the only source of oil in the country!"

"No, but they are a major supply and the only one that is large enough to handle the demand."

but Andrew Stockton retired quite unexpectedly, and now we had to wait till his nephew reopens the plant."

I see. Well, I trust that you will take care of it among all your other activities. Dr. Stadler shrugged with annoyance. It is becoming a little ridiculous—the number of technological ventures that an institution of science has to handle for the government."

But Dr. Stadler—

I know, I know, it can't be avoided. By the way, what is Project X?

Dr. Ferris' eyes shot to him swiftly—an odd bright glance, alertness that seemed startled but not frightened. Where did I hear about Project X, Dr. Stadler?

Oh, I heard a couple of your younger boys saying something about it with an air of mystery you'd expect from amateur detectives. They told me it was something very secret."

That's right, Dr. Stadler. It is an extremely secret research project which the government has entrusted to us. And it is of utmost importance that the newspapers get no word about it."

What's the X?

Xylophone. Project Xylophone. That is a code name of course. The work has to do with sound. But I am sure that it would interest you. It is a purely technological undertaking.

"Yes, do spare me the story. I have no time for your technological undertakings."

"May I suggest that it would be advisable to refrain from mentioning the words Project X to anyone, Dr. Stadler?"

"Oh, all right, all right. I must say I do not enjoy discussing of that kind."

"But of course! And I wouldn't forgive myself if I allowed my time to be taken up by such concerns. Please feel certain that I may safely leave it to me." He made a movement to rise. "Now, this was the reason you wanted to see me, please believe that!"

"No," said Dr. Stadler slowly. "This was not the reason I wanted to see you."

Dr. Ferris volunteered no questions, no eager offers of service, remained seated, merely waiting.

Dr Stadler reached over and made the book slide from the  
left to the center of his desk, with a contemptuous flick of one  
finger. "Will you tell me, please," he asked, "what is this piece of  
nonsense?"

"Some twenty thousand copies in two weeks  
I have read it."

"And?"

"I expect an explanation."

Do you realize what  
The style alone the  
of this nature?

"I expect a more dignified  
of presentation?" The voice was so innocently smooth that Dr  
Stadler could not decide whether this was mockery

Do you realize what you're preaching in this book?"

Since you do not seem to approve of it Dr Stadler I'd rather

used by it.

If a drunken lout could find the power to express himself on  
paper," said Dr Stadler, "if he could give voice to his essence—  
eternal savage, leering his hatred of the mind—this is the sort  
of book I would expect him to write. But to see it come from a  
man, under the imprint of this Institute!"

"But, Dr Stadler, this book was not intended to be read by science.  
It was written for that drunken lout."

"What do you mean?"

"For the general public."

"But, good God! The feeblest imbecile should be able to see the  
ring contradictions in every one of your statements."

"Let us put it this way, Dr Stadler: the man who doesn't see  
it, deserves to believe all my statements."

"But you've given the prestige of science to that unspeakable  
thing! It was all right for a disreputable mediocrity like Simon  
Schmitt to drool in as some sort of woozy mysticism—nobody  
noticed him. But you've made them think it's science. Science!  
You've taken the achievements of the mind to destroy the mind. By  
what right did you use my work to make an unwarranted pre-  
posterous switch into another field, pull an inapplicable metaphor  
and draw a monstrous generalization out of what is merely a  
mathematical problem? By what right did you make it sound as if  
I gave my sanction to that book?"

Dr Ferris did nothing: he merely looked at Dr Stadler calmly;  
the calm gave him an air that was almost patronizing. "Now,

you see Dr Stadler, you're speaking as if this book were addressed to a thinking audience. If it were one would have to be concerned with such matters as accuracy, validity, logic and the prestige of science. But it isn't. It's addressed to the public. And you have always been first to believe that the public does not think." He paused but Dr Stadler said nothing. "This book may have a philosophical value whatever, but it has a great psychological value."

Just what is that?

You see Dr Stadler people don't want to think. And the deeper they get into trouble the less they want to think. But by some sort of instinct they feel that they ought to and it makes them feel guilty. So they'll bless and follow anyone who gives them a justification for not thinking. Anyone who makes a virtue—a highly intellectual virtue—out of what they know to be their sin, their weakness and their guilt."

And you propose to pander to that?"

"That is the road to popularity."

Why should you seek popularity?"

Dr Ferris' eyes moved casually to Dr Stadler's face as if by pure accident. "We are a public institution," he answered evenly, "supported by public funds."

So you tell people that science is a futile fraud which ought to be abolished?"

"That is a conclusion which could be drawn in logic from my book. But that is not the conclusion they will draw."

"And what about the disgrace to the Institute in the eyes of the men of intelligence wherever such may be left?"

"Why should we worry about them?"

Dr Stadler could have regarded the sentence as conceivable had it been uttered with hatred, envy or malice but the absence of any such emotion, the casual ease of the voice, an ease suggesting a chuckle hit him like a moment's glimpse of a realm that could not be taken as part of reality, the thing spreading down to his stomach was cold terror.

Did you observe the reactions to my book, Dr Stadler? It was received with considerable favor."

"Yes—and that is what I find impossible to believe." He had to speak he had to speak as if this were a civilized discussion, he could not allow himself time to know what it was he had felt for a moment. I am unable to understand the attention you received in all the reputable academic magazines and how they could permit themselves to discuss your book seriously. If Hugh Akston were around no academic publication would have dared to treat this as a work admissible into the realm of philosophy."

"He is not around."

Dr Stadler felt that there were words which he was now called upon to pronounce—and he wished he could end this conversation before he discovered what they were.

"On the other hand," said Dr Ferris "the ads for my book—oh, I'm sure you wouldn't notice such things as ads—quote a letter of high praise which I received from Mr Wesley Mouch."

to the hell ■ Mr Wesley Mouch?

Ferris smiled "In another year, even you won't ask that  
Dr Stadler Let us put it this way Mr Mouch is the man  
rationing oil—for the time being "

■ I suggest that you stick to your job Deal with Mr Mouch  
in the realm of oil furnaces, but leave the realm of ideas

ould be curious to try to formulate the line of demarcation."

Ferris, in the tone of an idle academic remark "But if we re  
about my book, why, then we're talking about the realm of  
relations " He turned to point solicitously at the mathematical

■ chalked on the blackboard "Dr Stadler, it would be dis-  
if you allowed the realm of public relations to distract you  
is work which you alone on earth are capable of doing "

ld not  
black  
him

any  
purpose in your book I don't see what it's intended to  
dash."

it you?" Dr Ferris' eyes flickered briefly to his face the  
of insolence was too swift to be identified with certainty

cannot permit myself to consider certain things as possible in  
zed society," Dr Stadler said sternly

it is admirably exact," said Dr Ferris cheerfully "You can  
omit yourself "

Ferris rose, being first to indicate that the interview was ended

call for me whenever anything occurs in this Institute to  
you discomfort, Dr Stadler," he said "It is my privilege al  
to be at your service "

wing that h h h . . . . .

lizat

iper

cyo

h D

beg you to form a . . . . .

of course, its falling to pieces and I had of  
a new one sometime ago, the best one on the market a  
loud convertible—but Lawrence Hammond went out of busi-  
ness last week, without reason or warning so now I'm stuck. Those  
cars seem to be vanishing somewhere. Something will have  
done about it "

When Ferris had gone, Dr Stadler sat at his desk his shoul-  
ders hunched together, conscious only of a desperate wish not to  
disturb anyone. In the fog of the pain which he would not  
acknowledge was also the desperate feeling that no one—no one of  
his acquaintance—would ever see him again.  
He knew the word:



make it

He picked up the book and let it drop into the wastebasket. A face came to his mind, suddenly and clearly, as if in seeing the purity of its every line, a young face he had permitted himself to recall for years. He thought: No, he has not read this book, he won't see it, he's dead, he must have died long ago.

The sharp pain was the shock of discovering simultaneously that this was the man he longed to see more than any other in the world—and that he had to hope that this man was dead.

He did not know why—when the telephone rang and his very why he seized tremblingly for an appointment indeed.

Monday morning? Yes—look, Miss Taggart, I have an engagement in New York today, I could drop in at your office this afternoon, if you wish. No, no—no trouble at all, I'll be delighted. This afternoon, Miss Taggart, about two—I mean, about two o'clock."

He had no engagement in New York. He did not give himself time to know what had prompted him to do it. He was smiling eagerly, looking at a patch of sunlight on a distant hill.

Da— and I calm in the easier to do effort

carrying supplies to Hammondsville, Colorado

She knew what steps would come next: first, the death of special freights—then the shrinking in the number of boxcars at Hammondsville, attached, like poor relatives, to the rear end of freights bound for other towns—then the gradual cutting of stops at Hammondsville Station from the schedules of the passenger trains—then the day when she would strike Hammondsville, Colorado, off the map. That had been the progression of Wyatt Junction and of the town called Stockton.

She knew—once word was received that Lawrence Hammond had retired—that it was useless to wait, to hope and to wonder what his cousin, his lawyer or a committee of local citizens would recede the plant. She knew it was time to start cutting the schedules.

It had lasted less than six months after Ellis Wyatt had gone

sources and their letterheads "The little fellow's day in the sun," columnist had said. Their sun had been the flames that twisted through the derricks of Wyatt Oil. In its glare they made the kind of fortunes they had dreamed about, fortunes requiring no competence or effort. Then their biggest customers, such as power companies, who drank oil by the trainful and would make no allowances for human frailty, began to convert to coal—and the other customers, who were more tolerant, began to go out of business—the boys in Washington imposed rationing on oil and an emergency tax on employers to support the unemployed oil field workers—then a few of the big oil companies closed down—then the little fellows in the sun discovered that a drilling bit which had cost a hundred dollars, now cost them five hundred there being no outlet for oilfield equipment, and the suppliers having to earn on the drill what they had earned on five or perish—then the pipe lines began to close, there being no one able to pay for their upkeep—then the railroads were granted permission to raise their freight rates, there being little oil to carry and the cost of running oil trains having crushed two small lines out of existence—and then the sun . . .

But when their fortunes had vanished and their lamps had stopped, did the little fellows realize that no business in the country could afford to buy oil at the price it would now take them to produce it. Then the boys in Washington granted subsidies to the oil operators but not all of the oil operators had friends in Washington, and there followed a situation which no one cared to examine too closely or to discuss.

Andrew Stockton had been in the sort of position which most of the businessmen envied. The rush to convert to coal had descended upon his shoulders like a weight of gold. He had kept his plant working around the clock, running a race with next winter's blizzards, casting parts for coal burning stoves and furnaces. There were not many dependable foundries left. He had become one of the main pillars supporting the cellars and kitchens of the country. The pillar collapsed without warning. Andrew Stockton announced that he was retiring, closed his plant and vanished. He left no word on what he wished to be done with the plant or whether his relatives had the right to reopen it.

There still were cars on the roads of the country but they moved running skeletons of skeletons of cars the ditches by the way longer, and the men still able to

get oil by means of friendships that nobody cared to question. These men bought cars at any price demanded. Lights flooded the mountains of Colorado from the great windows of the plant, where the assembly belts of Lawrence Hammond poured trucks and cars to the sidings of Tagga. Hammond had retired like the single stroke. Local citizens was now broadcasting appeals on the radio begging Lawrence Hammond wherever he was to give them permission to reopen his plant. There was no answer.

She had screamed. Andrew Stockton had quit she asked.

No, Miss Taggart. I can't explain it. Stockton had told her on her last trip to Colorado two months ago. He never said a word he's dead or living same as happened the day before he came to see him on that last evening. They talked late into the night—when I went to sleep the light was still burning in Andrew's study.

People were silent in the towns of Colorado. Dagny had seen the way they walked in the streets past their small drugstores, hardware stores and grocery markets as if they hoped that the motions of their jobs would save them from looking ahead at the future. She too had walked through those streets trying not to lift her head, not to see the ledges of sooted rock and twisted steel which had been the Wyatt oil fields. They could be seen from many of the towns when she had looked ahead she had seen them in the distance.

One well on the crest of the hill was still burning. Nobody had been able to extinguish it. She had seen it from the streets, a spot of fire twisting convulsively against the sky as if trying to tear loose. She had seen it at night across the distance of a hundred clear black miles from the window of a train, a small violent flame waving in the wind. People called it Wyatt's Torch.

The longest train on the John Galt Line had forty cars. The fastest ran at fifty miles an hour. The engines had to be spared; they were coal burning engines long past their age of retirement. Jim obtained the oil for the Diesels that pulled the Comet and a few of their transcontinental freights. The only source of fuel it could count on and deal with was Ken Danagger of Damage Coal in Pennsylvania.

Empty trains clattered through the four states that were tied to neighbors to the throat of Colorado. They carried a few carloads of sheep, some corn, some melons and an occasional farmer with an overdressed family who had friends in Washington. Jim had obtained a subsidy from Washington for every train that was run not as a profit making carrier but as a service of "public equality."

It took every scrap of her energy to keep trains running through the sections where they were still needed in the areas that we

producing But on the balance sheets of Taggart Trans-  
port the checks of Juna subsidies for empty trains bore  
figures than the profit brought by the best freight train of  
the industrial division

most prosperous six months  
the glossy pages of his re-  
cord he had not earned—the

the empty trains and the money he did not own—the sums  
should have gone to pay the interest and the retirement of  
the bonds the debt which by the will of Wesley Mouch he had  
permitted not to pay He boasted about the greater volume  
of freight carried by Taggart trains in Arizona—where Dan Conway  
closed the last of the Phoenix Durango and retired and in  
Montana—where Paul Larkin was shipping iron ore by rail and  
most of the ore boats on the Great Lakes had gone out of ex-

istence  
"You have always considered money making as such an important  
business," Juna had said to her with an odd half smile "Well it  
is to me that I'm better at it than you are"

Nobody professed to understand the question of the frozen  
bonds perhaps because everybody understood it too well  
First, there had been signs of a panic among the bondholders  
of a dangerous indignation among the public Then Wesley  
Mouch had issued another directive which ruled that people could  
have their bonds "defrosted" upon a plea of "essential need" the gov-  
ernment would purchase the bonds if it found the proof of the  
need satisfactory There were three questions that no one answered  
asked "What constituted proof?" "What constituted need?"  
"Essential—to whom?"

When it became bad manners to discuss why one man received  
a grant defreezing his money while another had been refused  
the question turned away in mouth pinched silence if anybody asked a  
question "One was supposed to describe, not to explain to catalogue  
the needs, not to evaluate them Mr Smith had been defrosted Mr  
Jones had not that was all And when Mr Jones committed suicide  
the question said "Well I don't know if he'd really needed his money  
the government would have given it to him but some men are  
greedy"

One was not supposed to speak about the men who having been  
defrosted, sold their bonds for one third of the value to other men  
who possessed needs which miraculously made thirty three frozen  
dollars melt into a whole dollar or about a new profession practiced  
by bright young boys just out of college who called themselves  
"defrosters" and offered their services to help you draft your ap-  
plication in the proper modern terms The boys had friends in  
Washington.

Look at  
Juna's  
and once  
it had

of blood. But then, in the concourse of the Terminal she looked at the statue of Nat Taggart and thought: It was *your* rail, you made it, you fought for it, you were not stopped by fear or loathing—I won't surrender it to the men of blood and rust—I'm the only one left to guard it.

She had not given up her quest for the man who invented the motor. It was the only part of her work that made her able to bear the rest. It was the only goal in sight that gave meaning to her struggle. There were times when she wondered why she wanted to rebuild that motor. What for?—some voice seemed to ask. Because I'm still alive, she answered. But her quest had remained futile. Her two engineers had found nothing in Wisconsin. She had sent them in search through the country for men who had worked for Twentieth Century, to learn the name of the inventor. They had learned nothing. She had sent them to search through the files of the Patent Office, no patent for the motor had ever been registered.

The only remnant of her personal quest was the stub of a cigarette with the dollar sign. She had forgotten it, until a recent evening it fell into her hand. The man had

held it cautiously between two fingers, he had never heard of a brand and wondered how he could have missed it. "Was it of good quality, Miss Taggart?" "The best I've ever smoked." He had shaken his head puzzled. He had promised to discover where those cigarettes were made and to get her a carton.

She had tried to find a scientist able to attempt the reconstruction of the motor. She had interviewed the men recommended to her as the best in their field. The first one, after studying the remnants of the motor and of the manuscript, had declared in the tone of a drill sergeant that the thing could not work, had not worked and he would prove that no such motor could ever be made to work. The second one had drawled in the tone of an ass to a boring imposition that he did not know whether it could be done or not and did not care to find out. The third had said in a voice belligerently insolent that he would attempt the task on a ten-year contract at twenty-five thousand dollars a year—"All right," said Miss Taggart, "if you expect to make huge profits on the motor, it's you who should pay for the gamble of my time." The fourth, who was the youngest, had looked at her silently for a moment and the lines of his face had slithered from blankness to a suggestion of contempt. "You know, Miss Taggart, I don't think that such a motor should ever be made, even if somebody did know how to make it. It would be so superior to anything we've ever had that it would be unfair to lesser scientists because it would leave no field for their achievements and abilities. I don't think that strong should have the right to wound the self-esteem of the weak." She had ordered him out of her office and had sat in incredulous horror before the fact that the most vicious statement she had ever heard had been uttered in a tone of moral righteousness.

decision to speak to Dr Robert Stadler had been her last  
had forced herself to call him, against the resistance of some  
valuable point within her that felt like brakes slammed tight  
and argued against herself. She had thought I deal with men

she sat at her desk, over the schedules of the John Galt Line,  
waiting for Dr Stadler to come she wondered why no first rate

it was  
yourself  
possible  
easier in

Pennsylvania needs trains more trains if only—

Dr Robert Stadler," said the voice of the interoffice commu-  
nicator on her desk

He came in, smiling, the smile seemed to underscore his words  
in Taggart, would you care to believe how helplessly glad I am  
to see you again?"

as she answered  
covered her slender  
normal movement

"What if I confessed that all I needed was some plausible ex-  
cuse in order to come? Would it astonish you?"

"I would try not to overtax your courtesy." She did not smile  
and sat down Dr Stadler.

He looked brightly around him. "I've never seen the office of a  
head executive. I didn't know it would be so solemn  
a place. Is that in the nature of the job?"

"The matter on which I'd like to ask your advice is far removed  
from the field of your interests, Dr Stadler. You may think it odd  
if I should call on you. Please allow me to explain my reason."

"The fact that you wished to call on me is a fully sufficient rea-  
son. If I can be of any service to you, any service whatever, I  
don't know what would please me more at this moment. His smile  
had an attractive quality, the smile of a man of the world who used  
it not to cover his words but to stress the audacity of expressing  
sincere emotion.

"My problem is a matter of technology," she said in the clear  
expressionless tone of a young mechanic discussing a difficult as-  
signment. "I fully realize your contempt for that branch of science  
and do not expect you to solve my problem—it is not the kind of work  
which you do or care about. I should like only to submit the prob-  
lem to you, and then I'll have just two questions to ask you. I had

to call on you, because it is a matter that involves someone's mind—a very great mind, and"—she spoke impersonally, in the manner of rendering exact justice—"and you are the only great mind in this field."

She could not tell why her words hit him as they did. She saw the stillness of his face, the sudden earnestness of the eyes, a strange, almost dead as then she heard some one

She told him about the motor and the place where she had found it, she told him that it had proved impossible to learn the name of the inventor, she did not mention the details of her quest. She handed him photographs of the motor and the remnant of the manuscript.

She watched him as he read. She saw the professional assurance in the swift, scanning motion of his eyes, at first, then the pause, then the growing intentness, then a movement of his lips which from another man, would have been a whistle or a gasp. She saw him stop for long minutes and look off, as if his mind were racing all—she saw him close himself to receive the new vision, she saw his silent excitement, she knew that he had forgotten her office, her existence, everything but the sight of an achievement—and in tribute to his being capable of such reaction, she wished were possible for her to like Dr. Robert Stadler.

They had been silent for over an hour, when he finished and looked up at her. "But this is extraordinary!" he said in the joyous, astonished tone of announcing some news she had not expected.

She wished she could smile in answer and grant him the companionship of a joy celebrated together, but she merely nodded and said coldly, "Yes."

"But, Miss Taggart, this is tremendous!"

"Yes."

"Did you say more than that?" she asked. "Can you see what the concept of energy according to which his motor would have been impossible. He formulated a new premise of his own and he solved the secret of converting static energy into kinetic power. Do you know what that means? Do you realize what a feat of pure, abstract science he has to perform before he could make his motor?"

"Who?" she asked quietly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"That was the first step, ask you, to know

No, he said slowly, frowning, "no, I can't think of it."

one And that's odd because an ability of this kind couldn't have passed unnoticed anywhere somebody would have called him to my attention they always sent promising young physicists to me Did you say you found this in the research laboratory of a plain commercial motor factory?"

"Yes."

"That's odd What was he doing in such a place?"

"Designing a motor."

"That's what I mean. A man with the genius of a great scientist, who chose to be a commercial inventor? I find it outrageous. He invented a motor and he quietly performed a major revolution in the history of the automobile." "I don't know," she told him. "I don't know."

nly

"I beg your pardon?"

"No I'm sorry Dr Stadler I did not intend to discuss any irrelevant subject."

He was looking off pursuing his own course of thought "Why didn't he come to me? Why wasn't he in some great scientific establishment where he belonged? If he had the brains to achieve this surely he had the brains to know the importance of what he had done. Why didn't he publish a paper on his definition of energy? I can see the general direction he'd taken but God damn him!—the most important pages are missing the statement isn't here! Surely somebody around him should have known enough to announce his work to the whole world of science. Why didn't they? How could they abandon just abandon, a thing of this kind?"

"These are the questions to which I found no answers."

"And besides from the purely practical aspect why was that motor left in a junk pile? You'd think any greedy fool of an industrialist would have grabbed it in order to make a fortune. No intelligence was needed to see its commercial value."

She smiled for the first time—a smile ugly with bitterness she said nothing.

"You found it impossible to trace the inventor?" he asked.

"Completely impossible—so far."

"Do you think that he is still alive?"

"I have reason to think that he is. But I can't be sure."

"Suppose I tried to advertise for him?"

"No. Don't."

"But if I were to place ads in scientific publications and have Dr Ferris"—he stopped he saw her glance at him as swiftly as he glanced at her she said nothing but she held his glance he looked away and finished the sentence coldly and firmly—and have Dr Ferris broadcast on the radio that I wish to see him would he refuse to come?"

"Yes, Dr Stadler I think he would refuse."

He was not looking at her. She saw the faint tightening of his facial muscles and simultaneously the look of something going



slack in the lines of his face, she could not tell what sort of light was dying within him nor what made her think of the death of a light

He tossed the manuscript down on the desk with a casual contemptuous movement of his wrist "Those men who do not mind being practical enough to sell their brains for money, ought to acquire a little knowledge of the conditions of practical reality"

He looked at her with a touch of defiance, as if waiting for an angry answer

He remained expressionless

There were of no consequence

question I wanted

to tell me the name of any physicist you know who, in your judgment, would possess the ability to attempt the reconstruction of the motor

He looked at her and chuckled, it was a sound of pain "Have you been tortured by it too Miss Taggart? By the impossibility of finding any sort of intelligence anywhere?"

"I have interviewed some physicists who were highly recommended to me and I have found them to be hopeless"

He leaned forward eagerly "Miss Taggart," he asked, "did you call on me because you trusted the integrity of my scientific judgment? The question was a naked plea"

"Yes," she answered evenly, "I trusted the integrity of your scientific judgment"

He said

in

said

cause you see, this has been my hardest problem—trying to find men of talent for my own staff Talent, hell! I'd be satisfied with a semblance of promise—but the men they send me couldn't be honestly said to possess the potentiality of developing into decent garage mechanics I don't know whether I am getting older and more demanding, or whether the human race is degenerating but the world didn't seem to be so barren of intelligence in my youth Today if you saw the kind of men I've had to interview, you'd—"

He stopped abruptly as if at a sudden recollection He remained silent, he seemed to be considering something he knew, but did not wish to tell her she became certain of it, when he concluded brusquely, in that tone of resentment which conceals an evasion, "No I don't know anyone I'd care to recommend to you"

"This was all I wanted to ask you, Dr Stadler," she said "Thank you for giving me your time"

He sat silently still for a moment, as if he could not bring himself to leave

"Miss Taggart, he asked, "could you show me the actual motor itself?"

She looked at him

It is in an

"I don't

b. But

. I have

special motive. It's only my personal curiosity. I would like to know it—that's all."

When they stood in the granite vault, over a glass case containing  
shards of broken metal, he took off his hat with a slow, absent  
movement—and she could not tell whether it was the routine gesture  
remembering that he was in a room with a lady, or the gesture of  
tipping one's head over a coffin.

They stood in silence, in the glare of a single light refracted from a glass surface to their faces. Tram wheels were clicking in the distance, and it seemed in times as if a sudden sharper jolt of vibration were about to awaken an answer from the corpse in the glass case.

"It's so wonderful," said Dr. Stadler, his voice low. "It's so wonderful to see a great, new, crucial idea which is not mine!"

She looked at him, wishing she could believe that she understood him correctly. He spoke in passionate sincerity, discarding convention, discarding concern for whether it was proper to let her hear his confession of his pain, seeing nothing but the face of a woman who was able to understand.

"Miss Taggart, do you know the hallmark of the second rater?"

respect and an achievement to admire. They bare their teeth at you from out of their rat holes, thinking that you take pleasure in letting your brilliance dim them—while you'd give a year of your life to see a flicker of talent anywhere among them. They envy achievement, and their dream of greatness is a world where all men have become their acknowledged inferiors. They don't know that that dream is the infallible proof of mediocrity, because that sort of world is what the man of achievement would not be able to bear. They have no way of knowing what he feels when surrounded by inferiors—hatred? no, not hatred, but boredom—the terrible, hopeless, draining, paralyzing boredom. Of what account are praise and adulation from men whom you don't respect? Have you ever felt the longing for someone you could admire? For something, not to look down at, but up to?"

"I've felt it all my life," she said. It was an answer she could not refuse him.

"I know," he said—and there was beauty in the impersonal  
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form "M" case, "ton on that motor He would not work for me—so he is probably the kind of man you want"

tion on that motor. He would not work for me—so he is probably the kind of man you want."

But by the time he raised his head—and before he saw the look of admiration in her eyes the open look he had begged for the look of forgiveness—he destroyed his single moment's atonement by adding in a voice of drawing room sarcasm. Apparently the young man had not learned the value of the welfare of

private employer

He turned away not to see the look that was fading from her face not to let himself know its meaning. Yes she said her voice hard he is probably the kind of man I want."

He is a young physicist from the Utah Institute of Technology," he said dryly. His name is Quentin Daniels. A friend of mine sent him to me a few months ago. He seems nice but he would not take the job I offered him. I am not sure of a scientist but at least he

reach him at the Utah Institute of Technology. I don't know what he is doing there now—they closed the Institute a year ago."

"Thank you, Dr. Stadler. I shall get in touch with him."

If you want me to, I'll be glad to help him with the theoretical part of it. I'm going to do some work myself starting from the leads of that manuscript. I'd like to find the cardinal secret of energy that its author had found. It's his basic principle that we must discover. If we succeed, Mr. Daniels may finish the job as far as your motor is concerned."

I will appreciate any help you may care to give me, Dr. Stadler."

They walked silently through the dead tunnels of the Terminal, down the ties of a rusted track under a string of blue lights—the distant glow of the platforms.

At the mouth of the tunnel they saw a man kneeling on the track, hammering at a switch with the unrhythmical exasperation of one of uncertainty. Another man stood watching him impatiently.

Well, what's the matter with the damn thing? asked the watcher.

Don't know."

You've been at it for an hour.

"Yeah."

"How long is it going to take?"

"Who is John Galt?"

Dr. Stadler winced. They had gone past the men when he said "I don't like that expression."

"I don't either," she answered.

Where did it come from?"

"Nobody knows."

They were silent, then he said "I knew a John Galt once. Only he died long ago."

"Who was he?"

"I used to think that he was still alive. But now I'm certain that he must have died. He had such a mind that had he lived the whole world would have been talking of him by now."

"But the whole world is talking of him."

He stopped still "Yes . . ." he said slowly, staring at a thought at had never struck him before, "yes . . . Why?" The word was away with the sound of terror.

"Who was he, Dr Stadler?"

"Why are they talking of him?"

"Who was he?"

He shook his head with a shudder and said sharply, "It's just a coincidence. The name is not uncommon at all. It's a meaningless coincidence. It has no connection with the man I knew. That man is dead."

He did not permit himself to know the full meaning of the words as added

"He has to be dead."

\* \* \*

The order that lay on his desk was marked 'Confidential Emergency . . . Priority . . . Essential need certified by office of Top Co-ordinator . . . for the account of Project X'—and demanded that he sell ten thousand tons of Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute.

Rearden read it and glanced up at the superintendent of his mills who stood before him without moving. The superintendent had come in and put the order down on his desk without a word.

"I thought you'd want to see it," he said, in answer to Rearden's glance.

Rearden pressed a button, summoning Miss Ives. He handed the order to her and said, "Send this back to wherever it came from. Tell them that I will not sell any Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute."

Gwen Ives and the superintendent looked at him, at each other and back at him again, what he saw in their eyes was congratulation.

"Yes, Mr Rearden," Gwen Ives said formally, taking the slip as if it were any other kind of business paper. She bowed and left the room. The superintendent followed.

Rearden was left alone.

He

on

in

but able to watch dispassionately the working of the Fair Share Law

Nobody had known how that law was to be observed. First, he had been told that

an equal share of Rearden Metal. The waiting list of orders could not be filled in three years even had he been permitted to work at full capacity. New orders were coming in daily. They were not orders any longer in the old honorable sense of trade; they were demands. The law provided that he could be sued by any consumer who failed to receive his fair share of Rearden Metal.

Nobody had known share of what amount had been sent to him for tribulation. After many a boy announced that customers would get five hundred tons of the Metal each in the order of the dates of their applications. Nobody had argued against his figure. There was no way to form an argument; the figure could have been one pound or one million tons with the same validity. The boy had established an office at the Rearden mills where four girls took applications for shares of Rearden Metal. At the present rate of the mills' production, the applications extended well into the next century.

Five hundred tons of Rearden Metal could not provide three miles of rail for Taggart Transcontinental; it could not provide the bracing for one of Ken Danagger's coal mines. The largest industries Rearden's best customers were denied the use of his Metal. But golf clubs made of Rearden Metal were suddenly appearing on the market as well as coffee pots, garden tools and bathroom faucets. Ken Danagger, who had seen the value of the Metal and had dared to order it against a fury of public opinion, was not permitted to obtain it; his order had been left unfilled, cut off without warning by the new laws. Mr. Mowen, who had betrayed Taggart Transcontinental in its most dangerous hour, was now making switches of Rearden Metal and selling them to the Atlantic Southern. Rearden looked on his emotions plugged out.

He turned away without a word, when anybody mentioned to him what everybody knew: the quick fortunes that were being made on Rearden Metal. "Well, no," people said in drawing rooms. "You mustn't call it black market because it isn't, really. Nobody is selling the Metal illegally. They're just selling their right to it. Not selling really, just pooling their shares." He did not want to know the insect and

two  
—no  
partner. He knew that five times larger than right to the Metal except

The young boy from Washington—whom the steel workers had nicknamed the Wet Nurse—hung around Rearden with a primitive astonished curiosity which, incredibly, was a form of admiration. Rearden watched him with disgusted amusement. The boy had no inkling of any concept of morality; it had been bred out of him by his college; this had left him an odd frankness, naïve and cynical as like the innocence of a savage.

"You despise me, Mr Rearden," he had declared once, suddenly and without any resentment "That's impractical"

"Why is it impractical?" Rearden had asked

The boy had looked puzzled and had found no answer He never had an answer to any "why?" He spoke in flat assertions He would say about people, "He's old fashioned," "He's unreconstructed," "He's unadjusted, without hesitation or explanation, he would also say, while being a graduate in metallurgy, "Iron smelting, I think, tends to require a high temperature" He uttered nothing but uncertain opinions about physical nature—and nothing but categorical imperatives about men.

"Mr Rearden," he had said once, "if you feel you'd like to hand it more of the Metal to friends of yours—I mean, in bigger hauls than I could handle—"

"Of course, there would be a few expenses For things in Washington You know how it is, things always occasion expenses"

"What things?"

"You understand what I mean"

"No," Rearden had said, "I don't Why don't you explain it to me?"

The boy had looked at him uncertainly, weighed it in his mind, and then come out with "It's bad psychology"

"What is?"

"You know, Mr Rearden, it's not necessary to use such words"

"As what?"

"Words are relative They're only symbols If we don't use ugly words we won't have any ugliness Why do you want me to say things one way, when I've already said them another?"

"Which way do I want you to say them?"

"Why do you want me to?"

"For the same reason that you don't."

The boy had remained silent for a moment, then had said "You know Mr Rearden, there are no absolute standards We can't go by fixed principles, we've got to be flexible, we've got to adjust to the reality of the day and act on the expediency of the moment."

"Run along"

"A"

"Yes"

"He"

"I"

"You"

"We"

"They"

"It"

"That"

"This"

"Now"

"Then"

"Where"

"When"

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the men at the dawn of the Iron Age—he thought—but with less hope

He tried to avoid these thoughts. He had to stand on guard against his own feeling—as if some part of him had become a stranger that had to be kept numb, and his will had to be its constant watchful anesthetic. That part was an unknown of which he knew only that he must never see its root and never give it voice. He had lived through one dangerous moment which he could not allow to return.

It was then—  
held paralyzed  
under the  
news of E

before any thought of the future, any sense of disaster, any shock, terror or protest—had been to burst out laughing. He had laughed in triumph in deliverance, in a spurning living exultation—and the words which he had not pronounced, but felt were: God bless you, Ellis, whatever you're doing!

When he had grasped the implications of his laughter, he had known that he was now condemned to constant vigilance against himself. Like the survivor of a heart attack, he knew that he had had a warning and that he carried within him a danger that could strike him at any moment.

He had held it off since then. He had kept an even, cautious, severely controlled pace in his inner steps. But it had come close to him for a moment, once again. When he had looked at the order of the State Science Institute on his desk, it had seemed to him that the glow moving over the paper did not come from the furnaces outside, but from the flames of a burning oil field.

"Mr. Rearden" said the Wet Nurse, when he heard about the rejected order, "you shouldn't have done that."

"Why not?"

"There's going to be trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"It's a government order. You can't reject a government order."

"Why can't I?"

"It's an Essential Need project, and secret, too. It's very important."

"What kind of a project is it?"

"I don't know. It's secret."

"Then how do you know it's important?"

"It said so."

"Who said so?"

"You can't doubt such a thing as that, Mr. Rearden!"

"Why can't I?"

"But you can't."

"If I can't, then that would make it an absolute and you said there aren't any absolutes."

"That's different."

"How is it different?"

"It's the government."

"You mean, there aren't any absolutes except the government?"  
"mean if they say it's important, then it is."

"Why?"

"I don't want you to get in trouble, Mr. Rearden, and you're  
; to, sure as hell. You ask too many why's. Now why do you  
ask?"

"And—"

"ame from the State Science Institute or from Washington?"

"I understand that you refused to sell metal to the State Science  
Institute, Mr. Rearden," he said in a soft, confidential tone of voice.

"That's right," said Rearden.

"But wouldn't that constitute a willful disobedience of the law?"

"It's for you to interpret."

"May I ask your reason?"

"My reason is of no interest to you."

"Oh, but of course it is! We are not your enemies, Mr. Rearden.  
We want to be fair to you. You mustn't be afraid of the fact that  
we are a hard-headed—  
st you. We actually  
laborer. We would

reader will tell you  
little over a year

"Oh, no, no, no! Why talk of newspapers? Can't we settle this as  
friendly, private matter?"

"That's up to you."

"We don't want this in the newspapers."

"No?"

"No. We—"

"Oh, well, unfortunately, the regulations of top policy do  
not permit me to tell you its nature in fuller detail."

"You know," said Rearden, "I could tell you—as my reason—  
as I do not—"

"I know for—"

"I know for—"

"Oh, but—"

"I believe you—"

"I believe you—"

"Suppose I don't wish to be relieved of it?"

"But—that is an old-fashioned and— and purely theo-

retical attitude."

"I said I could name it as my reason. But I won't—because, in

his case, I have another, inclusive reason. I would not sell any



Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute for any purpose whatever good or bad secret or open "

But why?"

"Listen said Rearden slowly. "there might be some sort of justification for the savage societies in which a man had no expect

I don't think it's advisable to use such words Mr Rearden I don't think it's practical to think in such terms After all the government cannot—in the pursuit of wide national policies—take cognizance of your personal grudge against some one particular institution "

"Then don't take cognizance of it."

What do you mean?

"Don't come asking my reason "

But, Mr Rearden we cannot let a refusal to obey the law pass unnoticed What do you expect us to do?

"Whatever you wish

But this is totally unprecedented. Nobody has ever refused to sell an essential commodity to the government As a matter of fact the law does not permit you to refuse to sell your Metal to any consumer let alone the government "

"Well why don't you arrest me then?

"Mr Rearden this is an amicable discussion Why speak of such things as arrests?"

"Isn't that your ultimate argument against me?"

"Why bring it up?"

"Isn't it implied in every sentence of this discussion?"

Why name it?"

"Why not? There was no answer "Are you trying to hide from me the fact that if it weren't for that trump card of yours I wouldn't have allowed you to enter this office?"

"But I'm not speaking of arrests "

"I am

"I don't understand you Mr Rearden "

"I am not helping you to pretend that this is any sort of amicable discussion It isn't Now do what you please about it

There was a strange look on the man's face bewilderment as he had no conception of the issue confronting him and fear as if he had always had full knowledge of it and had lived in dread of the posture.

Rearden felt a strange excitement he felt as if he were about grasp something he had never understood as if he were on the threshold of some discovery

"Mr

got up and walked to the window. "I'll tell you what you can do," he pointed to the siding where ingots of Rearden Metal were being loaded onto freight cars. "There's Rearden Metal. Drive down there with your trucks—like any other looter, but without his risk, because I won't shoot you, as you know I can't—take as much of the Metal as you wish and go. Don't try to send me payment. I won't accept it. Don't print out a check to me. It won't be cashed. If you want that Metal, you have the guns to seize it. Go ahead."

"Good God, Mr. Rearden, what would the public think?"

"I don't think so," said Rearden.

He knew that the incident was not ended. He knew also that the secrecy of Project X was not the main reason why these people dared to make the issue public. He knew that he felt an odd, joyous, light-hearted self-confidence. He knew that these were the right steps down the trail he had glimpsed.

Dagny lay stretched in an armchair of her living room, her eyes closed. This day had been hard, but she knew that she would see Hank Rearden tonight. The thought of it was like a lever lifting the weight of hours of senseless ugliness away from her.

She lay still, content to rest with the single purpose of waiting quietly for the sound of the key in the lock. He had not telephoned her, but she had heard that he was in New York today for a conference with producers of copper, and he never left the city till next morning.

It would be wrong that it had been lived, but that it had been survived. It was wrong, she thought, it was viciously wrong, that one should ever be forced to say that about any hour of one's life. But she could not think of it now. She was thinking of him, of the struggle she had watched through the months behind them, his struggle for deliverance, she had known that she could help him win, but must help him in every way except in words.

She thought of the evening last winter when he came in, took a small package from his pocket and held it out to her, saying, "I want you to have it." She opened it and stared in incredulous bewilderment at a pendant which

valent  
stone,  
purcha

"Hank why?"

No special reason. I just wanted to see you wear it."

Oh, no, not a thing of this kind! Why waste it? I go so rarely occasions where one has to dress. When would I ever wear it?"

He looked at her, his glance moving slowly from her legs to face. "I'll show you," he said.

He led her to the bedroom, he took off her clothes, without word in the manner of an owner undressing a person whose consent is not required. He clasped the pendant on her shoulders. She stood naked, the stone between her breasts, like a sparkling drop of blood.

"Do you think a man should give jewelry to his mistress for no purpose but his own pleasure?" he asked. "This is the way I want you to wear it. Only for me. I like to look at it. It's beautiful."

She laughed. It was a soft, low, breathless sound. She could not speak or move only nod silently in acceptance and obedience. She nodded several times, her hair swaying with the wide, circular movement of her head, then hanging still as she kept her head bowed before him.

She dropped down on the bed. She lay stretched lazily, her body thrown back, her arms at her sides, palms pressed to the rough texture of the bedspread, one leg bent, the long line of the leg extended across the dark blue linen of the spread, the stone glowing like a wound in the semi-darkness, throwing a star of rays against her skin.

Her eyes were half-closed in the mocking conscious triumph of being admired, but her mouth was half-open in helpless expectancy. He stood across the room, looking at her, at her stomach drawn in as her breath was drawn, at the sensitive beauty of a sensitive consciousness. He said, his voice low, intent and quiet.

"Dagny, if some artist painted you as you are now, men would come to look at the painting to experience a moment that no one could give them in their own lives. They would call it great art. They would not know the nature of what they felt, but the painting would show them everything—even that you're not some classical beauty."

"Oh yes, really, I understand!" she said. "Do you understand it fully?"—she thought, but did not say it aloud.

On the evening of a blizzard, she came home to find an entire spread of tropical flowers standing in her living room against a dark glass of windows battered by snowflakes. They were still Hawaiian Torch Gladioli, their hands were

as wasted as an object in a public window"

He telephoned her at the office one winter morning and said not the tone of an invitation but in the tone of an executive order "We're going to have dinner together tonight. I want you to dress. Do you have any sort of blue evening gown? Wear it."

The dress she wore was a slender tunic of dusty blue that gave her a certain grace in the blue. It brought and allowed her to thank that. "No?" he

asked, drawing her to a mirror.

The huge blanket of fur made her look like a child bundled for a storm. The luxurious texture transformed the innocence of the outward bundle into the elegance of a perversely intentional contrast into a look of stressed sensuality. The fur was a soft brown tinted by an aura of blue that could not be seen, only felt like

She sat beside him in his car as he drove through the dark streets of the city. A sparkling net of snow flashed into sight once in a while when they went past the lights on the corners. She did not know where they were going. She sat low in the seat, leaning back, looking up at the snowflakes. The fur cape was wrapped tightly about her. Within it, her dress felt as light as a nightgown and the edge of the cape was like an embrace.

She looked at the angular tiers of lights rising through the snowy air. She felt at the heel of her foot and the way she

The car went down into a tunnel, streaked through an echoing tube of tile under the river and rose to the coils of an elevated highway under an open black sky. The lights were below them now spread  
cranes,  
torted  
him on  
in acid

wore his formal clothes. He belonged here, too—she thought, looking down at the flats of New Jersey—among the cranes the air and the grinding clatter of gears.

When they sped down a dark road through an empty countryside with the strands of snow glittering across their headlights—she remembered how he had looked in the summer of their vacation dressed in slacks stretched on the ground of a lonely ravine with the grass under his body and the sun on his bare arms. He belonged in the countryside she thought—he belonged everywhere—he was a man who belonged on earth—and then she thought of the words which were more exact: he was a man to whom the earth belonged—the man at home on earth and in control. Why, then—she wondered—should he have had to carry a burden of tragedy which in silent endurance he had accepted so completely that he had barely known he carried it? She knew part of the answer, she felt as if the whole answer were close and she would grasp it on some approaching dawn. But she did not want to think of it now, because they were moving away from the burdens because within the space of a speeding car they held the stillness of full happiness. She moved her head unperceptibly to let it touch his shoulder for a moment.

The car left the highway and turned toward the lighted squares and distant windows that hung above the snow beyond a grillwork and bare branches. Then in a soft dim light they sat at a table by a window facing darkness and trees. The inn stood on a knoll in the woods, it had the luxury of high cost and privacy, and an air of beautiful taste suggesting that it had not been discovered by those who sought high cost and notice. She was barely aware of the dining room—it blended away into a sense of superlative comfort, and its only ornament that caught her attention was the glitter of its bare branches beyond the glass of the window.

She sat, looking out, the blue fur half slipping off her naked arms and shoulders. He watched her through narrowed eyes, with the satisfaction of a man studying his own workmanship.

"I like giving things to you," he said "because you don't want them."

"No?"

"And it's not that I want you to have them. I want you to have them from me."

"That is the way I do need them. Hank. From you."

"Do you understand that it's nothing but vicious self-indulgence on my part? I'm not doing it for your pleasure, but for mine."

"Hank!" The cry was involuntary, it held amusement, deep indignation and pity. "If you'd given me those things just for

asure not yours I would have thrown them in your face "

"Yes Yes, then you would—and should "

"Did you call it your vicious self indulgence?"

"That's what they call it."

"Oh yes! That's what they call it What do you call it Hank?"

"I don't know," he said indifferently, and went on intently "I  
ow only that if it's vicious then let me be damned for it, but

winda + I did a - b a - to know how much I wanted

it—including the preposterous feat of turning you into a luxury  
object."

"But I'm a luxury object that you've paid for long ago," she said,  
he was not smiling

"How?"

"By means of the same values with which you paid for your  
wills."

She did not know whether he understood it with that full,  
unconscious finality which is a thought named in words but she knew  
that what he felt in that moment was understanding She saw the  
relaxation of an invisible smile in his eyes

"I've never despised luxury," he said "yet I've always despised  
happiness"

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quet  
old  
ster  
dia  
I'd  
say  
but

"business"

He looked at the dim sculptured beauty of the room and at the  
people who sat at the tables They sat in a manner of self-conscious  
display as if the enormous cost of their clothes and the enormous  
care of their grooming should have fused into splendor, but didn't.  
Their faces had a look of rancorous anxiety

"Dagny look at those people They're supposed to be the play-  
boys of life the amusement-seekers and luxury lovers They sit  
there waiting for this place to give them meaning not the other  
way around But they're always shown to us as the enjoyers of  
material pleasures—and then we're taught that enjoyment of

rial pleasures is evil. Enjoyment? Are they enjoying it? Isn't there some sort of perversion in what we're taught, some error vicious and very important?'

"Yes, Hank—very vicious and very, very important."

"They are the playboys, while we're just tradesmen, you and I. Do you realize that we're much more capable of enjoying this place than they can ever hope to be?"

45 Yes 39

He said she  
all to fools?

He smiled. 'I didn't answer you well, because the only answer I gave you was the thing your words meant to me, was an answer that you would have me for, I thought, it was that I wanted you.' He looked at her. 'Dagny, you didn't intend it then, but what you were saying was that you wanted to sleep with me, wasn't it?'

"Yes, Hank Of course"

He held her eyes, then looked away. They were silent for a few minutes. He glanced at the soft twilight around them, then at the sparkle of two wine glasses on their table. "Dagny, in my youth when I was working in the ore mines in Minnesota, I thought that I wanted to reach an evening like this. No, that was not what I wanted."

work  
winter  
was  
earth

ledge—I thought that some day I would sit in a place like <sup>this</sup> where one drink of wine would cost more than my day's wages, and I would have earned the price of every minute of it and of every drop and of every flower on the table, and I would sit there for no purpose but my own amusement."

She asked, smiling, "With your mistress?"

She saw the shot of pain in his eyes and wished desperately that she had not said it.

"With a woman," he answered. She knew the word he had not pronounced. He went on, his voice soft and steady. "When I became rich and saw what the rich did for their amusement I thought that the place I had imagined, did not exist. I had not even imagined it too clearly. I did not know what it would be like only what I would feel. I gave up expecting it years ago. But I feel it tonight."

He was not a

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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

She sat shocked and still. He had never used that word before. He threw his head back and smiled the most brilliantly gay smile she had ever seen on his face.

"Your first moment of weakness, Dagny," he said.  
She laughed and shook her head.

She laughed and shook her head. He stretched his arm across the

When she looked up at him, her smile matched his—and the rest of the evening was their celebration—for all his years since the night on the mine ledges—for all her years since the night of her

... were . . . in what were taught . . . some error . . . was  
ous and very important?"—she thought of his words, as she lay  
an armchair of her living room, on a dismal evening of spring,  
telling him to come . . . Just a little farther, my darling—she  
ought—look a little farther and you'll be free of that error and of  
the wasted pain you never should have had to carry . . . But  
she felt that she, too, had not seen the whole of the distance, and  
she wondered what were the steps left for her to discover

Walking through the darkness of the streets on his way to her  
apartment, Rearden kept his hands in his coat pockets and his arms  
close to his sides, because he felt that he did not want to touch  
anything or brush against anyone. He had never experienced it  
before—this sense of revulsion that was not aroused by any particu-  
lar object, but seemed to flood everything around him making the  
city seem sodden. He could understand disgust for any one thing,  
and he could fight that thing with the healthy indignation of know-  
ing that it did not belong in the world, but this was new to him—  
his feeling that the world was a loathsome place where he did not  
want to belong.

He had held a conference with the producers of copper, who had  
not been garroted by a set of directives that would put them out of  
business in another year. He had had no advice to give them, no  
solution to offer, his ingenuity, which had made him famous as the  
man who would always find a way to keep production going, had  
not been able to discover a way to save them. But they had all  
known that there was no way, ingenuity was a virtue of the mind—  
and in the issue confronting them, the mind had been discarded as  
irrelevant long ago. "It's a deal between the boys in Washington and  
the importers of copper," one of the men had said, "mainly d'An-  
conia Copper."

This was only a small, extraneous stab of pain, he thought, a feel-  
ing of disappointment in an expectation he had never had the right  
to expect, he should have known that this was just what a man like  
Francisco d'Anconia would do—and he wondered angrily why he  
felt as if a bright, brief flame had died somewhere in a lightless  
world.

He did not know whether the impossibility of acting had given  
him this sense of loathing or whether the loathing had made him  
lose the desire to act. It's both, he thought, a desire presupposes the  
possibility of action to achieve it, action presupposes a goal which is



worth achieving. If the only goal possible was to wheedle a precious moment's favor from men who held guns, then death action nor desire could exist any longer.

Then could life?—he asked himself indifferently. Life, he thought had been defined as motion, man's life was purposeful motion which was the state of a being to whom purpose and motion were denied, being he

nificance

“Why?”

He shrugged walking on, he did not care even to find an answer.

He observed, indifferently, the devastation wrought by his own indifference. No matter how hard a struggle he had lived through in the past, he had never reached the ultimate ugliness of abandonment the will to act. In moments of suffering, he had never let pain win its one permanent victory. He had never allowed it to make him lose the desire for joy. He had never doubted the nature of the world or man's greatness as its motive power and its core. Years ago, he had wondered with contemptuous incredulity about the fanatical sects that appeared among men in the dark corners of history.

it, he was an outsider with nothing at stake and no concern for remaining alive much longer.

Dagny and his wish to see her were the only exception left to him. The wish remained. But in a sudden shock, he realized that he felt no desire to sleep with her tonight. That desire—which had never given him

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ing for me that I want to look at it longer.”

He said it, from the doorway of her apartment, seeing her stretched

gaily were real. He grasped a feeling that he had always experienced, but never identified because it had always been absolute and immediate—a feeling that forbade him ever to face her in pain. It was much more than the pride of wishing to conceal his suffering. It was the feeling that suffering must not be granted recognition in her presence, that no form of claim between them should ever be motivated by pain and aimed at pity. It was not pity that he

brought here or came here to find

"Do you still need proof that I'm always waiting for you?" she asked, leaning obediently back in her chair, her voice was neither tender nor pleading but bright and mocking

"Dagny, why is it that most women would never admit that, but do so?"

"Because they're never sure that they ought to be wanted I am."

"I do admire self-confidence."

"Self-confidence was only one part of what I said, Hank."

"What's the whole?"

"Confidence of my value—and yours" He glanced at her as if striking the spark of a sudden thought, and she laughed adding I couldn't be sure of holding a man like Orren Boyle for instance. He wouldn't want me at all. You would "

"Are you saying " he asked slowly, "that I rose in your estimation when you found that I wanted you?"

"Of course "

"That's not the reaction of most people of being wanted "

"It isn't."

"Most people feel that they rise in their own eyes if others want them."

"I feel that others live up to me if they want me And that is the way you feel, too, Hank, about yourself—whether you admit it or not."

That's not what I said to you then on that first morning—he thought, looking down at her She lay stretched out lazily, her face blank, but her eyes bright with amusement. He knew that she was thinking of it and that she knew he was He smiled but said nothing else

As he sat half-stretched on the couch watching her across the room, he felt at peace—as if some temporary wall had risen between him and the things he had felt on his way here He told her about his encounter with the man from the State Science Institute because even though he knew that the event held danger an odd glowing sense of satisfaction still remained from it in his mind

He chuckled at her look of indignation "Don't bother being angry at them " he said "It's no worse than all the rest of what they're doing every day "

"Hank do you want me to speak to Dr Stadler about it?"

"Certainly not!"

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"H. . . "

"In regard to the motor "

"The motor ?" He said it slowly in a strange way as if the thought of the motor had suddenly brought back to him a realm he had forgotten Dagny the man who invented that motor he did exist, didn't he?"

"Why . . . of course What do you mean?"

"I mean only that . . . that it's a pleasant thought, isn't it? Even if he's dead now, he was alive once . . . so alive that he designed that motor. . . ."

"What's the matter, Hank?"

"Nothing. Tell me about the motor."

" . . . . . She got up and

The first thing he noticed were the lights of the city beyond the window—he felt as if they were being turned on, one by one, forming the great skyline he loved, he felt it, even though he knew that the lights had been there all the time. Then he understood that the thing which was returning was within him—the shape coming back

angular lines of a face stripped of everything but purpose—rising steps of steel and the steps of a being intent upon his goal—this is what they had been, all the men who had lived to invent the lights, the steel, the furnaces, the motors—they were the world, they, not the men who crouched in dark corners, half begging, half threatening, boastfully displaying their open sores—their only claim on life and virtue—so long as he knew that there existed one man with the bright courage of a new thought, could he give up the world to those others?—so long as he could find a single sight to give him a life-restoring shot of admiration, could he believe that the world belonged to the sores, the moans and the guns?—the men who invented motors did exist, he would never doubt their reality, it was his vision of them that had made the contrast unbearable, so

This face was bright with confidence, his voice sounded amused, protective and gentle, she could discover nothing else, he looked as if he had always looked, it was only the note of gentleness that seemed strange and new

"I kept feeling that I shouldn't have," she said, "but I didn't know why."

"I'll tell you why." He leaned forward. "What he wanted from you was a recognition that he was still the Dr. Robert Stadler he should have been, but wasn't and knew he wasn't. He wanted you to

him your respect, in spite of and in contradiction to his

ions He wanted you to juggle reality for him, so that his greatness would remain, but the State Science Institute would be wiped out, as if it had never existed—and you're the only one who could do it for him "

"Why ?"

"Because you're the victim "

She looked at him . . . and . . . He . . . and . . . she felt a . . .

Dagny, they're doing something that we've never understood . . . we know something which we don't, but should discover I can't see it fully yet, but I'm beginning to see parts of it That looter from the State Science Institute was scared when I refused to help him . . . stand that he was just an honest buyer of my Metal He was . . . and way deep Of what? I don't know—public opinion was just the name for it, but it's not the full name Why should he have been scared? He has the guns, the jails, the laws—he could have seized the whole of my mills, if he wished, and nobody would have been to defend me, and he knew it—so why should he have cared what I thought? But he did It was I who had to tell him that he wasn't a looter, but my customer and friend That's what he needed from me . . . And . . .

and as they pretend they see it They need some sort of sanction from us I don't know the nature of that sanction—but, Dagny, I know that if we value our lives, we must not give it to them If they put you on a torture rack, don't give it to them Let them destroy our railroad and my mills, but don't give it to them Because I know this much I know that that's our only chance

She had remained standing still before him, looking attentively at the faint outline of some shape she, too, had tried to grasp

"Yes . . ." she said "yes, I know what you've seen in them . . . we felt it, too—but it's only like something brushing past that's gone before I know I've seen it, like a touch of cold air, and what's left is always the feeling that I should have stopped it . . . I know that you're right I can't understand their game but this much is right We must not see the world as they want us to see it It's some sort of fraud, very ancient and very vast—and the key to break it is to check every premise they teach us, to question every precept, . . ."

She whirled to him at a sudden thought but she cut the motion off and the words in the same instant the next words would have been the ones she did not want to say to him She stood looking at him with a slow, bright smile of curiosity

Somewhere within him, he knew the thought she would not name, but he knew it only in that prenatal shape which has to find its words in the future He did not pause to grasp it now—because in the flooding brightness of what he felt, another thought, which was

its predecessor, had become clear to him and had been holding him for many minutes past. He rose, approached her and took her in his arms.

He held the length of her body pressed to his, as if their bodies were two currents rising upward together, each to a single point, each carrying the whole of their consciousness to the meeting at their lips.

What she felt in that moment contained, as one nameless part of it, the knowledge of the beauty in the posture of his body as he held her, as they stood in the middle of a room high above the lights of the city.

What he knew, what he had discovered tonight, was that his captured love of existence had not been given back to him by the return of his desire for her—but that the desire had returned after he had regained his world, the love, the value and the sense of the world—and that the desire was not an answer to her body, but a celebration of himself and of his will to live.

## Chapter II THE ARISTOCRACY OF PULL

The calendar in the sky beyond the window of her office said September 2. Dagny leaned wearily across her desk. The first light snap on at the approach of dusk was always the ray that hit the calendar, when the white-glowing page appeared above the roof. It blurred the city, hastening the darkness.

She had looked at that distant page every evening of the month behind her. Your days are numbered, it had seemed to say—as if it were marking a progression toward something it knew, but she didn't. Once, it had clocked her race to build the John Galt Line; now it was clocking her race against an unknown destroyer.

One by one, the men who had built new towns in Colorado, had departed into some silent unknown, from which no voice or person had yet returned. The towns they had left were dying. Some of them

another, the men had vanished. There had been a pattern about which she felt, but could not define, she had become able to predict, almost with certainty, who would go next and when, she was unable to grasp the "why?"

Of the men who had once greeted her descent from the cab of the engine on the platform of Wyatt Junction, only Ted Nielsen was left still running the plant of Nielsen Motors. "Ted, you won't be

next one to go?" she had asked him, on his recent visit to New York she had asked it trying to smile. He had answered grimly "I hope not." "What do you mean you hope?—aren't you sure?"

led terror of the unexplicable—unless they had some reason of  
Roger Marsh of Marsh Elec  
ed to his desk so that he  
ter what ghastly temptation  
at the men who'd left He

that's what he swore Two weeks ago he went He left me  
letter Dagny I can't tell what I'll do when I see it—  
whatever it was that they saw when they went'

It seemed to her that some destroyer was moving soundlessly  
rough the country and the lights were dying at his touch—someone  
he thought bitterly, who had reversed the principle of the Twentieth  
entury motor and was now turning kinetic energy into static.

That was the enemy—she thought, as she sat at her desk in the  
dying twilight—with whom she was running a race The monthly  
port from Quentin Daniels lay on her desk She could not be  
certain, yet, that Daniels would solve the secret of the motor but  
the destroyer, she thought, was moving swiftly surely at an ever  
accelerating tempo, she wondered whether, by the time she rebuilt  
the motor, there would be any world left to use it

He seems to have forgotten ■ Well I'll just say that  
'Governmental scientific inquiry' is a contradiction in terms"

She asked him what position he held at the Utah Institute of  
Technology "Night watchman, he answered *What?* she gasped.  
"Night watchman," he repeated politely, as if she had not caught  
the words as if there were no cause for astonishment

Under her questioning he explained that he did not like any

the scientific foundations left in existence that he would have liked a job in the research laboratory of some big industrial concern—"But which one of them can afford to undertake any long-range work nowadays and why should they?"—so when the Utah Institute of Technology was closed for lack of funds he had remained there as night watchman and sole inhabitant of the place the salary was sufficient to pay for his needs—and the Institute's laboratory was there intact for his own private undisturbed use.

"So you're doing research work of your own?"

"That's right."

"For what purpose?"

"For my own pleasure."

"What do you intend to do if you discover something of scientific importance or commercial value? Do you intend to put it to some public use?"

"I don't know. I don't think so."

"Haven't you any desire to be of service to humanity?"

"I don't talk that kind of language, Miss Taggart. I don't think you do either."

"She laughed. 'I think we'll get along together, you and I.'"

"We will."

When she had told him the story of the motor, when he had studied the manuscript he made no comment but merely said that he would take the job on any terms she named.

She asked him to choose his own terms. She protested in astonishment, against the low monthly salary he quoted. Miss Taggart he said, "if there's something that I won't take it's something for nothing. I don't know how long you might have to pay me or whether you'll get anything at all in return. I'll gamble on my own mind. I won't let anybody else do it. I don't collect for an intention. But I sure do intend to collect for goods delivered. If I succeed that's when I'll skin you alive because what I want then is a percentage and it's going to be high but it's going to be worth you while."

When he named the percentage he wanted she laughed. "That's skinning me alive and it will be worth my while. Okay."

They agreed that it was to be her private project and that he was to be her private employee; neither of them wanted to have to deal with the interference of the Taggart Research Department. He asked to remain in Utah in his post of watchman where he had all the laboratory equipment and all the privacy he needed. The project was to remain confidential between them until and unless he succeeded.

"Miss Taggart," he said in conclusion, "I don't know how many years it will take me to solve this if ever. But I know that if I spend the rest of my life on it and succeed I will die satisfied." He added, "There's only one thing that I want more than to solve it: it's to meet the man who has it."

Once a month since his return to Utah she had sent him a check and he had sent her a report on his work. It was too early to hope but his reports were the only bright points in the stagnant fog of days in the office.

The calen-  
he city had  
of Rearden.  
dd see him

ight.

that she had to

slaining her absence afterwards.

She was hurrying across the concourse of the Terminal when she  
ard a voice calling. "Miss Taggart!" with a strange note of urgency  
reluctance, together. It stopped her abruptly, she took a few sec-  
ls to realize that it was the old man at the cigar stand who had  
led.

"I've been waiting to catch sight of you for days, Miss Taggart  
e been extremely anxious to speak to you." There was an odd  
blended  
i out of

ilar sign  
at you gave me some months ago—where did you get it?"  
She stood still for a moment. "I'm afraid that's a long, compli-  
ed story," she answered.

"Have you any way of getting in touch with the person who gave  
to you?"

"I suppose so—though I'm not too sure. Why?"

"Would he tell you where he got it?"

"I don't know. What makes you suspect that he wouldn't?"

He hesitated, then asked, "Miss Taggart, what do you do when  
ou have to tell someone something which you know to be im-  
ossible?"

She chuckled. "The man who gave me the cigarette said that in  
uch a case one—"

ave to tell me?"

I have checked

very source of information in and about the tobacco industry. I  
ave had that cigarette stub put through a chemical analysis. There  
s no plant that manufactures that kind of paper. The flavoring ele-  
ments in that tobacco have never been used in any smoking mixture  
I could find. That cigarette was machine made, but it was not made  
n any factory I know—and I know them all. Miss Taggart, to the  
best of my knowledge, that cigarette was not made anywhere on  
earth."

Rearden stood by, watching absently, while the waiter wheeled  
the dinner table out of his hotel room. Ken Danagger had left. The  
room was half-dark, by an unspoken agreement, they had kept



lights low during their dinner, so that Danagger's face would not be noticed and perhaps, recognized by the waiters

They had had to meet furtively, like criminals who could not be seen together. They could not meet in their offices or in their homes, only in the crowded anonymity of a city, in his suite at the Wayne-Falkland Hotel. There could be a fine of \$10 000 and ten years of imprisonment for each of them, if it became known that he had agreed to deliver to Danagger four thousand tons of structural shapes of Rearden Metal.

They had not discussed that law, at their dinner together, or their motives or the risk they were taking. They had merely talked business. Speaking clearly and dryly, as he always spoke at any conference, Danagger had explained that it was sufficient to brace such tunnels bracing much longer and to federated Coal Company.

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coal is

also yelling that the coal operators are profiteering in the ml short-  
age. One gang in Washington is yelling that I am expanding too  
much and am

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am not

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unwilling to satisfy the public's need of fuel. At my present rate of  
profit, this Confederated Coal property will bring back the money  
I spent on it—in forty seven years. I have no children. I bought it  
because there's one customer I don't dare leave without coal—and  
that's Taggart Transcontinental. I keep thinking of what would  
happen if the railroads collapsed. He had stopped, then added, "I  
don't know why I still care about that, but I do. Those people in  
Washington don't seem to have a clear picture of what that would be  
like. I have." Rearden had said, "I'll deliver the Metal. When you  
need the other half of your order, let me know. I'll deliver that, too."

At the end of the dinner, Danagger had said in the same precise  
impassive tone the tone of a man who has no great meaning of  
his words, "If any em-  
tempt private blackmail  
pay, if he has friends  
then I go to jail." "Th-

ca -

Now, the possibility of being seen  
possibility of being run over by a truck as a mere accidental  
without any mean-

the

business transaction he had enjoyed in a year's work—and that was hiding, in a guilty secret, his nights with Dagny, the only one that kept him alive. He felt that there was some connection between the two secrets, some essential connection which he had to discover. He could not grasp it, he could not find the words to name it, but he felt that the day when he would find them, he would

not hate it, because tomorrow morning seemed so close and he would have to leave her—he wondered whether he could stay in town tomorrow, or whether he should leave now, without telling her, so that he could wait, so that he could always have it out of him—the moment of closing his hands over her shoulders, looking down at her face. You're going insane, he thought—he knew that if she were beside him through every hour of his life it would still be the same, he would never have enough of it, he would have to invent some senseless form of torture for himself in order to bear it—he knew he would see her tonight, and the

hair over his arm, her eyes closed, the face drawn as in a look of pain, her mouth open to him. He stood at the wall, waiting, to let all the events of the day drop away from him, to feel free, to know that the next span of time

When the door of his room flew open without warning, he did not know how to hear or believe it, at first. He saw the silhouette of a woman, and of a bellboy who put down a suitcase and vanished. The voice he heard was Lillian's. "Why, Henry? All alone and in the dark?" She pressed a light switch by the door. She stood there, fastidiously groomed, wearing a pale beige traveling suit that looked as if she had traveled under glass; she was smiling and pulling her gloves with the air of having reached home. "Are you in for the evening, dear?" she asked. "Or were you going out?"

He did not know how long a time passed before he answered, "What are you doing here?"

"Why, don't you remember that Jim Taggart invited us to his dinner? It's tonight."

"I didn't intend to go to his wedding."

"Oh, but I did!"

"Why didn't you tell me this morning before I left?"

"To surprise you, darling." She laughed gaily. "It's practically impossible to drag you to any social function, but I thought you might



that seemed made of sincerity and courage  
"You prefer to be serious, Henry? All right. How long do you  
me to exist somewhere in the basement of your life? How  
ly do you want me to become? I've asked nothing of you. I've  
ou live your life as you pleased. Can't you give me one evening?  
I know you hate parties and you'll be bored. But it means a

on, but that's the form of any woman's happiness. You don't live  
such standards, but I do. Can't you give me this much, at the  
■ of a few hours of boredom? Can't you be strong enough to  
■ your obligation and to perform a husband's duty? Can't you  
there, not for your own sake, but mine, not because you want to  
but only because I want it?"

Dagny—he thought desperately—Dagny, who had never said ■

she on the salient floor  
usly, step-  
e wall. She  
y times in  
itude when  
shed they

An aging sob sister, who had a drippy love column in print and the

would the reporters out, that unhappy floor in their faces and had  
ng, she had

lippers  
-d  
the strand of pearls at

price of the entire contents of Cheryl's room. A bed took most of the room's space, and the rest was taken by a chest of drawers, one chair, and her few dresses hanging behind a faded curtain. The high hoop skirt of the wedding gown brushed against the walls when she moved, her slender figure swaying above the skirt in the dramatic contrast of a tight, severe, long sleeved bodice; the gown had been made by the best designer in the city.

"You see, when I got the job in the dime store, I could have moved to a better room," she said to the sob sister, in apology, "but I don't think it matters much where you sleep at night, so I saved my money, because I'll need it for something important in the future—" She stopped and smiled, shaking her head dazedly. "I thought I'd need it," she said.

"You look fine," said the sob sister. "You can't see much in that alleged mirror, but you're okay."

doesn't hold it against me"

"Uh huh," said the sob sister; her face looked grim. Cheryl remembered the wonder of the first time Jim Taggart had come here. He had come one evening, without warning, a month after their first meeting, when she had given up hope of ever seeing him again. She had been miserably embarrassed, she had felt as if she were trying to hold a sunrise within the space of a mud puddle—

She had not known what he thought. But he had known that she was stunned, not by the place, but by his bringing her there, that all her flushed face

Jim!"

Had he wished, she would have given him the only kind of pay

believe me, those people? I had to grant the unions demands to slow the trains—and the moratorium on bonds was the only I could do it, so that's why Wesley gave it to me, for the workers, for myself. All the newspapers said that I was a great example for businessmen to follow—a businessman with a sense of social responsibility.

...  
...  
... that way—she and Rearden and all those people? Why are 'so sure they're right? If I acknowledge their superiority in material realm, why don't they acknowledge mine in the spiritual? They have the brain, but I have the heart. They have the capacity to accumulate wealth, but I have the capacity to love. Isn't mine the greater strength?

Why  
and I'm not  
... that exactly why they should bow to me, because I'm not? Didn't that be an act of true humanity? It takes no kindness to respect a man who deserves respect—it's only a payment which he's owed. To give an unearned respect is the supreme gesture of charity. But they're incapable of charity. They're not human. They feel concern for anyone's need or weakness. No concern for no pity.

... he could understand little of it, but she understood that he was un-

... way to be worthy of him, she thought, was never to ask for anything. He offered her money once, and she refused it, with a bright, painful flare of anger in her eyes that he did not repeat it again. The anger was at herself: she wondered whether

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co  
ba  
st.  
sis  
m

wore the bracelet with her shabby black dress

He made her wear that bracelet again, on the night when he took her to a party, a great reception given by Mrs. Cornelius Pope. He considered her good enough to bring into the home of his friends, and thought—the illustrious friends whose names she had seen on the inaccessible mountain peaks that were the society columns of the

the courageous trust of a kitten when it sees a hand extended to people gathered to have a good time would not hurt anyone, thought

At the end of an hour, her attempt to smile had become a helpless bewildered plea. Then the smile went, as she watched the people around her. She saw that the trim, confident girls had a nasty reluctance of manner when they spoke to Jim, as if they did not respect him and never had. One of them in particular, a Betty Pope, daughter of the hostess, kept making remarks to him which she could not understand, because she could not believe that she understood them correctly.

No one had paid any attention to her, at first, except for a few astonished glances at her gown. After a while, she saw them look at her. She heard an elderly woman ask Jim, in the anxious tone referring to some distinguished family she had in mind knowing,

She tried to get out of the way, out of their notice. As she slipped

along the edge of the room, she heard some man say, with a  
ing, "Well, Jim Taggart is one of the most powerful men in Wash-  
on at the moment." He did not say it respectfully  
up on the terrace - her

he looked at the lone straight shaft of the Taggart Building rising  
he distance—and then she thought that she understood these peo-  
hated Jim because they envied him. Whatever they were, she  
right whatever the reason - and they -

typed in Buffalo, he was as lonely as she had always been, and the  
center of the world -

us man defying their opinion, and she was willing to match his  
rage by serving as the scarecrow of the occasion  
but she was glad when it was over, when she sat beside him in his  
driving home -

On the stoop of her rooming house, she said to him forlornly, "I'm  
ry if I let you down."  
He did not answer for a moment, and then he asked, "What would

answered, "I guess I I haven't any sense of humor."  
"This is a proposal, my dear."  
Then she -

anted it to happen  
She had not the slightest idea -



Jim's arm around her—she giggled with delight and wondered proudly whether every person in the city had seen it. After a while the delight vanished.

They kept photographing her at the dime store counter, in the sub

tures of Jim at his desk, in the concourse of the Taggart Terminal to the steps of his private railway car, at a formal banquet in Washington. The huge spreads of full newspaper pages, the articles in magazines, the radio voices, the newsreels, all were a single long sustained scream—about the "Cinderella Girl" and the "Democrat Businessman."

She told herself not to be suspicious, when she felt uneasy; she told herself not to be ungrateful, when she felt hurt. She felt it only in a few rare moments when she awakened in the middle of the night and lay in the silence of her room, unable to sleep. She knew that it would take her years to recover, to believe, to understand. She was reaching through her days like a person with a sunstroke, seeing nothing but the figure of Jim Taggart as she had seen him first on the night of his great triumph.

"Listen, kid," the sob sister said to her, when she stood in her room for the last time, the lace of the wedding veil streaming like crystal foam from her hair to the blotched planks of the floor. "You think that if one gets hurt in life, it's through one's own sins—and that's true in the long run. But there are people who'll try to hurt you through the good they see in you—knowing that it's the good needing it and punishing you for it. Don't let it break you when you discover that."

"I don't think I'm afraid," she said, looking intently straight before her, the radiance of her smile melting the earnestness of her glance. "I have no right to be afraid of anything. I'm too happy. You see, I always thought that there wasn't any one who could hurt me that all you can and give and give and give so soon."

"Money is the root of all evil," said James Taggart. "Money can't buy happiness. Love will conquer any barrier and any social distance."

He made everything real to her. She smiled and whispered, "I'm very happy."

At opposite ends of the ballroom, Orren Boyle who seemed too meager for his full-dress clothes, and Bertram Scudder, who seemed mightier for his, surveyed the crowd of guests with the same light, though neither of them admitted that he was thinking of Orren Boyle half told himself that he was looking for the faces of his friends, and Bertram Scudder suggested to himself that he was finding material for an article. But both, unknown to each other, were drawing a mental chart of the faces they saw, classifying them under two headings which, if named, would have read "Favor" and "Fear." There were men whose presence signified a special protection extended to James Taggart, and men whose presence signified a desire to avoid his hostility—those who represented the front and those who represented the back to let him clumb. By the unwritten code of the day, nobody invited or accepted an invitation from a man of public prominence except in token of one or the other of these motives. Those in the first group were, for the most part, youthful; they had come from Washington. Those in the second group were older, they were businessmen.

Orren Boyle and Bertram Scudder were men who used words as a public instrument, to be avoided in the privacy of one's own mind. Words were a commitment, carrying implications which they did not wish to face. They needed no words for their chart, the classification was done by physical means: a respectful movement of their eyebrows equivalent to the emotion of the word "So!" for the first group—and a sarcastic movement of their lips equivalent to the emotion of "Well, well!" for the second. One face was up the smooth working of their calculating mechanisms for a moment when they saw the cold blue eyes and blond hair of Clark Rearden, their muscles tore at the register of the second group in the equivalent of "Oh, boy!" The sum of the chart was an estimate of James Taggart's power. It added up to an impressive figure.

They knew that James Taggart was fully aware of it when they saw him moving among his guests. He walked briskly in a Morse code pattern of short dashes and brief stops with a manner of self-irritation, as if conscious of the number of people whom his displeasure might worry. The hint of a smile on his face had a flavor of gloating—as if he knew that the act of coming to honor a man was an act that disgraced the men who had come as if he were and enjoyed it.

A tail of figures kept trailing and shifting behind him as if their action were to give him the pleasure of ignoring them. Mr. Mowen

Taggart's eyes swept over the crowd once in a while swiftly and nervously, in the manner of a prowler's flashlight, thus, in the muscu-

lar shorthand leg ble to Orren Boyle meant that Taggart was looking for someone and did not want anyone to know it. The search ended when Eugene Lawson came to shake Taggart's hand and to say his wet lower lip twisting like a cushion to soften the blow "Mr Mouch couldn't come Jim Mr Mouch is so sorry, he had a special plane chartered but at the last minute things came up, crucial national problems you know" Taggart stood still did not answer and frowned

Orren Boyle burst out laughing Taggart turned to him so sharply that the others melted away without waiting for a command to vanish.

"What do you think you're doing?" snapped Taggart.

"Having a good time Jimmy just having a good time" said Boyle Wesley = your boy wasn't he?

"I know somebody who's my boy and he'd better not forget it."

Who? Larkin? Well no I don't think you're talking about Larkin. And if it's not Larkin that you're talking about why then I think you ought to be careful in your use of the possessive pronouns I don't mind the age classification I know I look young for my years but I'm just allergic to pronouns"

"That's very smart but you're going to get too smart one of these days"

"If I do you just go ahead and make the most of it Jimmy!"

"The trouble with people who overreach themselves is that they have short memories You'd better remember who got Rearden Metal choked off the market for you"

"Why I remember who promised to That was the party who then pulled every string he could lay his hands on to try to prevent that particular directive from being issued because he figured he might need rail of Rearden Metal in the future"

Because you spent ten thousand dollars pouring liquor into people you hoped would prevent the directive about the bond moratorium"

"That's right So I did I had friends who had railroad bonds And here they are"

my Well your  
nine beat yours  
hat the hell!

around only  
don't you try to fool me Jimmy Save the act for the suckers"

"If you don't believe that I've always tried to do my best for you—"

Sure you have The best that could be expected all things considered And

body got some-  
mind itted to re-  
money tends that

"Well

"Just what you're thinking The ones you buy aren't really worth a damn because somebody can always offer them more so the field is wide open to anybody and it's just like old fashioned competition again. But if you get the goods on a man then you've got him then

ere's no higher bidder and you can count on his friendship. Well, you have friends, and so have I. You have friends I can use, and vice versa. That's all right with me—what the hell!—one's got to make something. If we don't trade money—and the age of money past—then we trade men."

"What is it you're driving at?"

"Why, I'm just telling you a few things that you ought to remember. Now take Wesley, for instance. You promised him the assistant's job in the Bureau of National Planning—for double-crossing Rearden, at the time of the Equalization of Opportunity bill. You had the connections to do it, and that's what I asked you to do—in exchange for the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule, where I had the connections. So Wesley did his part, and you saw to it that you got it all on paper—oh sure, I know that you've got written proof of the kind of deals he pulled to help pass that bill, while he was taking Rearden's money to defeat it and keeping Rearden off guard. They were pretty ugly deals. It would be pretty messy for Mr. Mouch, if it all came out in public. So you kept your promise and you got the job for him, because you thought you had him. And so you did. And he paid off pretty handsomely, didn't he? But it works only just so long. After a while Mr. Wesley Mouch might get to be so powerful and the scandal so old, that nobody will care how he got his start or whom he double-crossed. Nothing lasts forever. Wesley was Rearden's man, and then he was your man, and he might be somebody else's man tomorrow."

"Are you giving me a hint?"

"Why no, I'm giving you a friendly warning. We're old friends, Jimmy, and I think that that's what we ought to remain. I think we can be very useful to each other, you and I, if you don't start getting the wrong ideas about friendship. Me—I believe in a balance of power."

"Did you prevent Mouch from coming here tonight?"

"Well, maybe I did and maybe I didn't. I'll let you worry about it. That's good for me, if I did—and still better, if I didn't."

Cherry's eyes followed James Taggart through the crowd. The faces that kept shifting and gathering around her seemed so friendly and their voices were so eagerly warm that she felt certain there was no malice anywhere in the room. She wondered why some of them talked to her about Washington, in a hopeful confidential manner of half sentences, half hints, as if they were seeking her help for something secret she was supposed to understand. She did not know what to say, but she smiled and answered whatever she pleased. She could not disgrace the person of "Mrs. Taggart" by any touch of fear.

Then she saw the enemy. It was a tall slender figure in a gray evening gown, who was now her sister-in-law.

The pressure of anger in Cherry's mind was the stored accumulation of the sounds of Jim's tortured voice. She felt the nagging pull of a duty left undone. Her eyes kept returning to the enemy and studying her intently. The pictures of Dagny Taggart in the newspapers had shown a figure dressed in slacks, or a face with

slanting hat brim and a raised coat collar. Now she wore a gray evening gown that seemed indecent, because it looked austere, modest, so modest that it vanished from one's awareness and left one too aware of the slender body it pretended to cover. There was a tone of blue in the gray cloth that went with the gun-metal gray of her eyes. She wore no jewelry, only a bracelet on her wrist, a chain of heavy metal links with a green blue cast.

Cherryl waited until she saw Dagny standing alone, then tore forward, cutting resolutely across the room. She looked at close range into the gun metal eyes that seemed cold and intense at once, the eyes that looked at her directly with a polite, impersonal curiosity.

"There's something I want you to know," said Cherryl, her voice taut and harsh, "so that there won't be any pretending about it. I'm not going to put on the sweet relative act. I know what you've done to Jim and how you've made him miserable all his life. I'm going to

ment

Rearden stood by Lillian's side and followed her when she moved. She wished to be seen with her husband, he was complying. He did not know whether anyone looked at him or not, he was aware of no one around them, except the person whom he could not permit himself to see.

The image still holding his consciousness was the moment when he had entered this room with Lillian and had seen Dagny looking at them. He had looked straight at her, prepared to accept any blow her eyes would choose to give him. Whatever the consequences to Lillian, he would have confessed his adultery publicly, there and in that moment, rather than commit the unspeakable act of evading Dagny's eyes, of closing his face into a coward's blankness, of pretending to her that he did not know the nature of his action.

But there had been no blow. He knew every shade of sensation ever reflected in Dagny's face, he had known that she had felt no shock, he had seen nothing but an untouched serenity. Her eyes had moved to his.

slips, revealed to them as simply and openly as the gray dress revealed her body.

She had bowed to them, the courteous movement of her head including them both. He had answered, he had seen Lillian's brief nod, and then he had seen Lillian moving away and realized that he had stood with his head bowed for a long moment.

He did not know what Lillian's friends were saying to him or

at he was answering. As a man goes step by step, trying not to think of the length of a borderless road, so he went moment by moment, keeping no imprint of anything in his mind. He heard echoes of Lillian's pleased laughter and a trace of satisfaction in her voice.

After a while, he noticed the women around him; they all seemed to resemble Lillian, with the same look of static grooming, with thin strings plucked to a certain life and given freedom by a certain grace. . . . the women were not the type, the essence of the type. This, then, was the thought—the happiness of feminine any which she had begged him to give her, these were the borders which he did not live by, but had to consider. He turned or escape to a group of men.

He could not find a single straight statement in the conversation of the men; whatever subject they seemed to be talking about never seemed to be the subject they were actually discussing. He listened like a foreigner who recognized some of the words, but could not connect them into sentences. A young man, with a look of alcoholic insolence, staggered past the group and snapped, chuckling, "Learned your lesson, Rearden?" He did not know what the young man had meant; but everybody else seemed to know it, they looked shocked and secretly pleased.

Lillian drifted away from him, for he had not understood that she . . . to a . . . the du . . . the soft cloud when she walked, the momentary pauses sculptured by the cloth, the shadows and the light. He saw it as a bluish gray smoke held shaped for an instant into a long curve that slanted forward to her knee and back to the tip of her sandal. He knew every facet the light would shape if the smoke were ripped away.

He felt a grief . . . of every man who where

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he was  
ys and  
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e stood  
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here, he wondered who had the right to demand . . . single irreplaceable hour of his life, when his only desire was to seize the slender figure in gray and hold her through the length of whatever time there was left for him to exist.

In the next moment, he felt the shudder of recapturing his mind. He felt the tight, contemptuous movement of his lips pressed together in token of the words he cried to himself: "You made a mess of it once, now stick to it. And then he thought sudden business transactions the courts of law did not recognize

wherein no valuable consideration had been given by one party to the other. He wondered what made him think of it. The thought seemed irrelevant. He did not pursue it.

James Taggart saw Lillian Rearden drift casually toward him at the one moment when he chanced to be alone in the dim corner between a potted palm and a window. He stopped and waited to let her approach. He could not guess her purpose, but this was the manner which in the code he understood meant that he had better hear her.

"How do you like my wedding gift, Jim?" she asked and laughed at his look of embarrassment. "No, no, don't try to go over the list of things in your apartment wondering which one the hell it was. It's not in your apartment, it's right here and it's a non-material gift, darling."

He saw the half hint of a smile on her face, the look understood among his friends as an invitation to share a secret victory. It was the look not of having outthought but of having outsmarted somebody. He answered cautiously with a safely pleasant smile. "Your presence is the best gift you could give me."

"My presence, Jim?"

The lines of his face were shock-bound for a moment. He knew what she meant but he had not expected her to mean it.

She smiled openly. "We both know whose presence is the most valuable one for you tonight—and the unexpected one. Didn't you really think of giving me credit for it? I'm surprised at you. I thought you had a genius for recognizing potential friends."

"H—"

"H—"

exp  
you

on didn't  
afraid of  
quite an

incalculable advantage isn't it?"

"I'm surprised, Lillian."

"Shouldn't you say impressed? Your guests are quite impressed. I can practically hear them thinking all over the room. Most of them are thinking, 'If he has to seek terms with Jim Taggart, we'd better toe the line.' And a few are thinking, 'If he's afraid, we'll get away with much more.' This is as you want it, of course—and I wouldn't think of spoiling your triumph—but you and I are the only ones who know that you didn't achieve it single-handed."

He did not smile; he asked, his face blank, his voice smooth but with a carefully measured hint of harshness. "What's your angle?"

She laughed. "Essentially—the same as yours, Jim. But speaking practically—none at all. It's just a favor I've done you and I need no favor in return. Don't worry. I'm not lobbying for any special interests. I'm not after squeezing some particular directives out of Mr. Mouch. I'm not even after a diamond tiara from you. Unless of course it's a tiara of a non-material order, such as your appreciation."

He looked straight at her for the first time; his eyes narrowed; his

he relaxed to the same half smile as hers suggesting the expression which, for both of them meant that they felt at home with each other an expression of contempt "You know that I have always been" "of mockery"

"I gave me if I think" "he said with angle you contempt—of losses—which"

She shrugged From the angle of a horsewoman darling. If you had the most powerful horse in the world, you would keep it bridled down to the gait required to carry you in comfort even though this meant the sacrifice of its full capacity even though its top speed could never be seen and its great power would be wasted You could do it—because if you let the horse go full blast it would throw you off in no time However financial aspects are not your chief concern—nor yours Jim"

"I did underestimate you" he said slowly

"Oh yes"

Now is that I can deliver him any time I choose You may act accordingly"

In the code of his friends to reveal any part of one's self was to give a weapon to an enemy—but he signed her confession and watched it when he said I wish I were as smart about my sister

She looked at him without astonishment she did not find the words irrelevant "Yes there's a tough one she said No vulnerable point? No weaknesses?"

"None"

"No love affairs?"

"God, no!"

She knew that

"Just."

"Lift an you're wonderfull" he said quite spontaneously

She laughed "That my dear is the non material tara I wanted"

The remnant of a smile stayed on her face as she moved through the crowd a fluid smile that ran softly into the look of tens on and boredom worn by all the faces around her She moved at random enjoying the sense of being seen her eggshell satin gown shimmering like heavy cream with the motion of her tall figure

It was the green blue spark that caught her attention it flashed



an instant under the lights, on the wrist of a thin, naked arm. The she saw the slender body, the gray dress, the fragile, naked shoulders. She stopped. She looked at the bracelet, frowning.

Dagny turned at her approach. Among the many things that Lillian resented, the impersonal politeness of Dagny's face was the one she resented most.

"What do you think of your brother's marriage, Miss Taggart?" she asked casually, smiling.

"I have no opinion about it."

"Do you mean to say that you don't find it worthy of any thought?"

"If you wish to be exact—yes, that's what I mean."

"Oh, but don't you see any human significance in it?"

"No."

"Don't you think that a person such as your brother's bride does deserve some interest?"

"Why, no."

"I envy you, Miss Taggart. I envy your Olympian detachment. It is, I think, the secret of why lesser mortals can never hope to equal your success in the field of business. They allow their attention to be divided—at least to the extent of acknowledging achievements in other fields."

"What achievements are we talking about?"

"Don't you grant any recognition at all to the women who attain unusual heights of conquest, not in the industrial, but in the human realm?"

"I don't think that there is such a word as 'conquest'—in the human realm."

"Oh, but consider, for instance, how hard other women would have had to work—if work were the only means available to them—to achieve what this girl has achieved through the person of your brother."

"I don't think she knows the exact nature of what she has achieved."

Rearden saw them together. He approached. He felt that he had to hear it, no matter what the consequences. He stopped silent beside them. He did not know whether Lillian was aware of his presence, but he knew that Dagny was.

"Do show a little generosity toward her, Miss Taggart," said Lillian. "At least, the generosity of attention. You must not despise the women who do not possess your brilliant talent but who exert their own particular endowments. Nature always balances her gifts and offers compensations—don't you think so?"

"I'm not sure I understand you."

"What I mean is that a woman who is not an expert in her own field should not care to speak more clearly, but she saw Rearden looking at her. She smiled and said, "Well, consider your sister-in-law, Miss T

part. What chance did she have to rise in the world? None—by our exacting standards. She could not have made a successful

could not compete with us lesser women in the sole field of our

"I haven't"

"I would like to  
and fully devoid

of human frailties. I would like to believe that you've never felt the desire to flatter—or to offend—anyone. But I see that you expected both Henry and me to be here tonight."

"Why, no, I can't say that I did, I had not seen my brother's guest list."

"Then why are you wearing that bracelet?"

Dagny's eyes moved deliberately straight to hers. "I always wear it."

"Don't you think that that's carrying a joke too far?"

"It was never a joke, Mrs. Rearden."

"Anything you wish?"

"What is your motive?"

"You knew my motive when you gave me the bracelet."

Lillian glanced at Rearden. His face was expressionless; she saw no reaction, no hint of intention to help her or stop her, nothing but an attentiveness that made her feel as if she were standing in a spot light.

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ing su  
again  
impro

"No."

"But surely you know that you are taking a dangerous and ugly risk."

"No."

"You do not take into consideration the possibility of being . . . misunderstood?"

"No."

Lillian . . . "The . . . don't

by a statement of that kind"

"I mean that your attitude may be highly idealistic—as I am sure it is—but, unfortunately, most people do not share your lofty frame of mind and will misinterpret your action in the one manner which would be most abhorrent to you."

"Then the responsibility and the risk will be theirs, not mine."  
"I admire your no, I must not say 'innocence,' but shall I say 'purity?' You have never thought of it, I'm sure, but life is not as straight and logical as . . . as a railroad track. It is regrettable, but possible, that your high intentions may lead people to suspect things which well, which I'm sure you know to be of a sordid and scandalous nature."

Dagny was looking straight at her. "I don't"

"But you cannot ignore that possibility"

"I do" Dagny said, "I cannot ignore the danger to Mr. Rearden?"

Dagny asked slowly, "What is the danger to Mr. Rearden?"

"I'm sure you understand me."

"I don't."

"Oh, but surely it isn't necessary to be more explicit."

"It is—if you wish to continue this discussion"

Lillian's eyes went to Rearden's face, searching for some sign to help her decide whether to continue or to stop. He would not help her

"Miss Taggart," she said, "I am not your equal in philosophical altitude I am only an average wife Please give me that bracelet"

"at you"

"Certainly not" She said, "I am not your equal in philosophical altitude I am only an average wife Please give me that bracelet"

and I of a . . .

never a reluctant admission of her actual opinion. "That would be u"

"I am not your equal in philosophical altitude I am only an average wife Please give me that bracelet"

"at you"

Lillian saw torture

"It isn't necessary, Hank," she said

"It is—for me," he answered coldly, not looking at her; he was looking at Lillian in the manner of a command that could not be disobeyed

"I am not your equal in philosophical altitude I am only an average wife Please give me that bracelet"

"at you"

Dagny stood still her eyes closed, she was thinking of the night when Lillian had given her the bracelet. He had taken his wife's side, then he had taken hers, now Of the three of them, she was the only one who understood fully what this meant

"Whatever is the worst you may wish to say to me, you will be right."

She heard him and opened her eyes He was looking at her coldly, his face harsh, allowing no sign of pain or apology to suggest a hope of forgiveness

"Dearest don't torture yourself like that" she said "I knew that you were married I've never tried to evade that knowledge I'm not hurt by it tonight"

Her first word was "I am a woman" and she said it with a faint smile

He saw the anger in his face—the rebellion against pity—he took it saying to her contemptuously that he had betrayed no torture and meant no harm

Water, as if the waiter were guilty of an unpardonable lapse Then Frank completed his sentence

Orren Boyle glanced at the group on his way across the room, but did not stop The glance was sufficient to give him an estimate of the nature of the group's concerns Fair enough he thought, one's got to trade something He knew, but did not care to name just what was being traded

"We are at the dawn of a new age" said James Taggart, from above the rim of his champagne glass "We are breaking up the vicious tyranny of economic power We will set men free of the mill"

of the dollar. We will release our spiritual arms from dependence of

Then

tan His smile suggested a summer morning. The way he wore his formal clothes made the rest of the crowd look as if they were masquerading in borrowed costumes.

"What's the matter?" he asked in the midst of their silence. "I say something that somebody here didn't know?"

At that thing James Taggart four

there, then by elevator from

New York and he  
it would it? You?

"I'm delighted to see you, of course," Taggart said cautiously, then added belligerently to balance it "But if you think you're got to—"

slide

"I tell you what I think!"

"This is hardly the moment for any—"

"I think you should present me to your bride, James. Your manners have never been glued to you too solidly—you always let them in an emergency, and that's the time when one needs them most."

Turning to escort him toward Cheryl, Taggart caught the faint sound that came from Bertram Scudder; it was an unborn which Taggart knew that the men who had crawled at his feet a month ago, whose hatred for Francisco d'Anconia was perhaps greater than his own, were enjoying the spectacle none the less. The implications of this knowledge were among the things he did not name.

Francisco bowed to Cheryl and offered his best wishes, as if he were the bride of a royal heir. Watching nervously, Taggart felt relief—and a touch of nameless resentment, which if named would have told him he wished the occasion deserved the grandeur of Francisco's manner gave it for a moment.

He was afraid to remain by Francisco's side and afraid to let himself loose among the guests. He backed a few tentative steps away. Francisco followed him smiling.

"You didn't think I'd want to miss your wedding, James—"

are my childhood friend and best stockholder?"

"What?" gasped Taggart, and regretted it the sound was a confession of panic.

"One reason is that a man doesn't want people to know his cash. Another is that he doesn't want them to learn how he got that way."

"I don't know what you mean," said Taggart, looking at him with a puzzled expression.

People would not gather around them. "You have been doing extremely well," he said, in the safe tone of a business compliment.

"Yes, haven't I? It's wonderful how the stock of d'Anconia Copper has risen within the last year. But I don't think I should be too conceited about it—there's not much competition left in the world, there's no place to go."

"I don't know what you mean," said Taggart, looking at him with a puzzled expression.

"I have decided that it's the best place for your hidden money, that it can't be beaten, that it would take a most unusual kind of man to destroy d'Anconia Copper—you were right."

"Well, I hear it said that you've begun to take your responsibilities seriously and that you've settled down to business at last. They say you've been working very hard."

"Oh, yes, indeed," said Taggart, looking at him with a puzzled expression.

"I suppose" said Taggart, in the cautious tone of an indirect question, "that I should feel flattered you chose to come to the party."

"Oh, but I had to come. I thought you were expecting me."

"Why, no, I wasn't. . . that is, I mean—"

"You should have expected me, James. This is the great, formal nose-counting event, where the victims come in order to show how safe it is to destroy them, and the destroyers form pacts of eternal friendship, which lasts for three months. I don't know exactly which group I belong to, but I had to come and be counted, didn't I?"

"What in hell do you think you're saying?" Taggart cried furiously, seeing the tension on the faces around them.

"Be careful, James. If you try to pretend that you don't understand me, I'm going to make it much clearer."

"If you think it's proper to utter such—"

"I think it's funny. There was a time when men were afraid that somebody would reveal some secret of theirs that was unknown to their fellows. Nowadays, they're afraid that somebody will name what everybody knows. . . that's all it

with all you  
of what you

"If you think it's proper to come to a celebration such as a wedding in order to insult the host—"

"Why, James, I came here to thank you."

"To thank me?"

"Of course. You've done me a great favor—you and your boys in Washington and the boys in Santiago. Only I wonder why none of you took the trouble to inform me about it. Those directives that

determined by any considerations such as you're intimating at—"

"I know how they're determined, James. I know that the deal started with the boys in Santiago, because they've been on the d'Anconia pay roll for centuries—well, no, 'pay roll' is an honorable word, it would be more exact to say that d'Anconia Copper has been paying them protection money for centuries—isn't that what your gangsters call it? Our boys in Santiago call it taxes. They've been getting their cut on every ton of d'Anconia copper sold. So they have a vested interest to see me sell as many tons as possible. But with the world turning into People's States, this is the only country

left—but I know that you came in on it somewhere, because you

to hold a sizable chunk of d'Anconia Copper stock. And it surely didn't displease you—that morning four months ago, the day after the directives were issued—to see the kind of soaring leap that Anconia Copper performed on the Stock Exchange. Why, it practically leaped off the ticker tape and into your face.

"Who gave you any grounds to invent an outrageous story of this kind?"

"Nobody. I knew nothing about it. I just saw the leap on the ticker tape that morning."

"Why don't you wish to take any credit for it, James? That's out of character and out of the policy at which you're such an expert."

"I wasn't consulted, I wasn't informed. I wasn't thought about, everything was arranged without me—and all I have to do now is produce the copper. That was a great favor, James—and you may be sure that I will repay it."

Francisco turned abruptly, not waiting for an answer and started away. Taggart did not follow. He stood, feeling that anything was preferable to one more minute of their conversation.

Francisco stopped when he came to Dagny. He looked at her for a silent instant, without greeting, his smile acknowledging that she had been the first person he saw and the first one to see him at his entrance into the ballroom.

Against every doubt and warning in her mind, she felt nothing but a desire to know him.

She felt her lips trembling and tightening at once as she answered, "I'm sorry if I show that I'm still open to be hurt. It shouldn't shock me that you've come to the stage where you despise achievement."

"Yes, don't I? I despise that line so much that I didn't want to reach the kind of end it has reached."

He saw her look of sudden attentiveness, the look of thought rushing into a breach torn open upon a new direction. He watched her for a moment, as if he knew every step she would find that road, then chuckled and said, "Don't you want to ask who is John Galt?"







is one who knows that he can't consume more than he has produced

"To trade by means of money is the code of the men of good will. Money rests on the axiom that — — — — — man of his own effort ex — — — — — you his — — — — — and you — — — — — them but no more. Money permits no deals except those to mutual benefit by the unforced judgment of the traders. Money demands of us — — — — —

or own benefit  
—the recognition  
the weight of

your misery—that you must offer them values, not wounds—that the common bond among men is not the exchange of suffering but the exchange of goods. Money demands that you sell, not your weakness to men's stupidity but your talent to their reason. It demands that you buy not the shoddiest they offer, but the best that your money can find. And when men live by trade—with reason, no force, as their final arbiter—it is the best product that wins, the best performance the man of best judgment and highest ability—and the degree of a man's productiveness is the degree of his reward. This is the code of existence whose tool and symbol is money. Is this what you consider evil?

But money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver. It will give you the means for the satisfaction of your desires but it will not provide you with desires. Money is the scourge of the men who attempt to reverse the law of causality—the men who seek to replace the mind by seizing the products of the mind.

cep  
if h  
h m

his judgment ends up by becoming the victim of his inferiors. The men of intelligence desert him but the cheats and the frauds come flocking to him drawn by a law which he has not discovered. That no man may be smaller than his money. This is the reason why you call it evil?

"Only the — — — — —  
man who — — — — —  
If an hei — — — — —  
him. But — — — — —  
it? Or die — — — — —  
wealth is — — — — —  
not think — — — — —  
the world — — — — —  
the dead virtue which was the fortune. Money is a living power that

without its root. Money will not serve the mind that cannot reach it. Is this the reason why you call it evil?

Money is your means of survival. The verdict you pronounce in the source of your livelihood is the verdict you pronounce in your life. If the

ing work you despise for purchasers you scorn? If so, then your money will not give you a moment's or a penny's worth of joy.

erty? Is this the root of your hatred of money?

"Money will always remain an effect and refuse to replace you as a cause. Money is the product of virtue, but it will not give you virtue and it will not redeem your vices. Money will not give you the unearned, neither in matter nor in spirit. Is this the root of your tired of money?"

[illegible]

the best among men. It's the person who would sell his soul for a nickel, who is loudest in proclaiming his hatred of money—and he has good reason to hate it. The lovers of money are willing to work for it. They know they are able to deserve it.

Let me see... ...the man

44. That sentence is the leper's bell of an approaching looter. So long as men live together on earth and need means to deal with one another—their only substitute, if they abandon money, is the muzzle of a gun.

"But money demands of you the highest virtues, if you wish to make it or to keep it. Men who have no courage, pride or self-esteem, men who have . . .

and the value of their looted money—the men who are the hitchhikers of virtue. In a moral society, these are the criminals, and the statutes are written to protect you against them. But society establishes criminals by right and looters-by law—men

use force to seize the wealth of *disarmed* victims—then money becomes its creators' avenger. Such looters believe it safe to rob defenseless men once they've passed a law to disarm them. But their loot becomes the magnet for other looters who get it from them as they got it. Then the race goes, not to the ablest at production, but to those most ruthless at brutality. When force is the standard, the murderer wins over the pickpocket. And then that society vanishes in a spread of ruins and slaughter.

Do you wish to know whether that day is coming? Watch money. Money is the barometer of a society's virtue. When you see that

protect you against them but protect them against you—when you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice—you may know that your society is doomed. Money is so noble a medium that it does not compete with guns and it does not make  
to survive as half

start by destroying money for money is men's protection and the base of a moral existence. Destroyers seize gold and leave to its owners a counterfeit pile of paper. This kills all objective standards and delivers men into the arbitrary power of an arbitrary setter of values. Gold was an objective value, an equivalent of wealth produced. Paper is a mortgage on wealth that does not exist, backed by a gun aimed at those who are expected to produce it. Paper is a check drawn by legal looters upon an account which is not theirs, upon the virtue of the victims. Watch for the day when it bounces, marked "account overdrawn."

When you have made evil the means of survival, do not expect men to remain good. Do not expect them to stay moral and lose their lives for the purpose of becoming the fodder of the immoral. Do not expect them to produce when production is punished and looting rewarded. Do not ask, "Who is destroying the world?" You are.

"You stand in the midst of the greatest achievements of the greatest productive civilization and you wonder why it is crumbling around you while you're damning its life-blood—money. You look upon money as the savages did before you, and you wonder why the jungle is creeping back to the edge of your cities. Throughout men's history, money was always seized by looters of one brand or another whose names changed but whose method remained the same: to seize wealth by force and to keep the producers bound, demeaned, defamed, deprived of honor. That phrase about the evil of money which you mouth with such righteous recklessness comes from a time when wealth was produced by the labor of slaves—slaves who repeated the motions once discovered by somebody's mind and left unimproved for centuries. So long as production was rule

force, and wealth was obtained by conquest, there was little to conquer. Yet through all the centuries of stagnation and starvation, men exalted the looters as aristocrats of the sword, as aristocrats of birth, as aristocrats of the bureau, and despised the producers, slaves as traders, as shopkeepers—as industrialists.

"To the glory of mankind, there was, for the first and only time in history, a country of money—and I have no higher, more reverent tribute to pay to America, for this means a country of reason, justice, freedom, production, achievement. For the first time man and money were set free, and there were no fortunes-by-conquest, but only fortunes by work, and instead of swordsmen and slaves there appeared the real maker of wealth, the greatest worker, the highest type of human being—the self made man—the American industrialist.

"If you ask me to name the proudest distinction of Americans, I would choose—because it contains all the others—the fact that they are the people who created the phrase *to make money*! No other nation has ever done this."

By the rotten cultures of the looters' continents. Now the looters' credo has brought you to regard your proudest achievements as a hallmark of shame, your prosperity as guilt, your greatest men, efficient factories, labor of whip and iron, the man who sumpers.

But he sees no difference between the power of the dollar and the power of the whip, ought to learn the difference on his own hide—no, I think, he will.

"Until and unless you discover that money is the root of all good, you ask for your own destruction. When money ceases to be the tool by which men deal with one another, then men become the tools of men. Blood, whips and guns—or dollars. Take your choice—there is no other—and your time is running out."

Francisco had not glanced at Rearden once while speaking, but the moment he finished, his eyes went straight to Rearden's face. Rearden stood motionless, seeing nothing but Francisco d'Anconia across the moving figures and angry voices between them.

There were people who had listened but now hurried away, and people who said "It's horrible! — It's not true! — How vicious!" wishing Francisco.

"Señor d'Anconia," declared the woman with the earrings, "I don't agree with you!"

"If you can refute a single sentence I uttered, madame, I shall hear it gratefully."

"Oh, I can't answer you. I don't have any answers, my mind."

doesn't work that way, but I don't *feel* that you're right, so I *know* that you're wrong."

"How do you know it?"

"I *feel* it. I don't go by my head, but by my heart. You might be good at logic, but you're heartless."

"Madame, when we'll see men dying of starvation around us, your heart won't be of any earthly use to save them. And I'm heartless enough to say that when you'll scream, 'but I didn't know it,' you will not be forgiven."

The woman turned away, a shudder running through the flesh of her cheeks and through the angry tremor of her voice. "Well, it's certainly a funny way to talk at a party!"

A portly man  
cheerfulness suggest

to let it become  
money, señor, I think I'm darn glad that I've got a goodly piece of Anconia Copper stock."

Francisco said gravely, "I suggest that you think twice, sir."  
"I had not seen  
if the other

old friend

He saw his own smile reflected in Francisco's face. "Hello"

"I want to speak to you"

"To whom do you think I've been speaking for the last quarter of an hour?"

Rearden chuckled, in the manner of acknowledging an opponent round. "I didn't think you had noticed me"

"I noticed, when I came in, that you were one of the only men to see me"

Francisco shrugged and said lightly, "A woman?"

Rearden noticed that Francisco had led him aside, away from the group, in so skilfully natural a manner that neither he nor the others had known it was being done intentionally

"I didn't expect to find you here," said Francisco. "You should have come to this party"

"Why not?"

"May I ask what made you come?"

"My wife was anxious to accept the invitation"

"Forgive me if I put it in such form, but it would have been much more proper and less dangerous if she had asked you to take her on a tour of whorehouses"

"What danger are you talking about?"

"Mr. Rearden, you do not know these people's way of doing business or how they interpret your presence here. In your code, but in theirs, accepting a man's hospitality is a token of good will, a declaration that you and your host stand on terms of a civilized

lationsh p Don t give them that kind of sanction."

"Then why d d yo i come here?"

Francisco shrugged gaily "Oh I—it doesn't matter what I do  
m only a party hound."

"What are you do ng at th s party?"

"Just looking for conquests."

"Found any?"

His face suddenly earnest Francisco answered gravely almost  
solemnly "Yes—what I think is go ng to be my best and greatest."

Rearden's anger was involuntary the cry not of reproach but of  
despair "How can you waste yourself that way?"

The faint suggest on of a smile like the rise of a d stant light,  
came into Francisco's eyes as he asked "Do you care to admit that  
you care about it?"

"You're go ng to hear a few more admissions, if that's what  
you're after. Before I met you I used to wonder how you could  
waste a fortune such as yours. Now t's worse because I can't de  
pise you as I d d as I d like to yet the question is much more  
terrible. How can you waste a mind such as yours?"

"I don't think I'm wasting it right now."

"I don't know whether there's ever been anything that meant a  
damn to you—but I'm go ng to tell you what I've never sa d to any  
one before. When I met you, do you remember that you sa d you  
wanted to offer me your gratitude?"

There was no trace of amusement left in Francisco's eyes. Rear  
den had never faced so solemn a look of respect. "Yes, Mr. Rear  
den," he answered quietly.

"I told you that I didn't need it and I insulted you for it. All  
right, you've won. That speech you made tonight—that was what  
you were offering me, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Mr. Rearden."

"I w —"

He p l it amused you to guess that I was glad to see you. You have  
something real to laugh about now if you wish."

"It might take me a few years but I will prove to you that these  
are the things I do not laugh about."

"Prove it now—by answering one question. Why don't you  
practice what you preach?"

"Am I sure that I don't?"

"If the things you sa d are true, if you have the greatness to  
show it you should have been the leading industrialist of the world  
by now."

Francisco sa d gravely as he had sa d to the portly man but  
with an odd note of gentleness in his voice "I suggest that you  
think twice, Mr. Rearden."

"I've thought about you more than I care to adm t. I have fo  
to answer."



"Let me give you a hint. If the things I said are true, who is the guiltiest man in this room tonight?"

"I suppose—James Taggart?"

"No, Mr. Rearden, it is not James Taggart. But you must define the guilt and choose the man yourself."

"A few years ago, I would have said that it's you. I still think that that's what I ought to say. But I'm almost in the position of that fool woman who spoke to you every reason I know tells me that you're guilty—and yet I can't feel it."

"You are making the same mistake as that woman, Mr. Rearden, though in a nobler form."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean much more than just your judgment of me. That woman and all those like her keep evading the thoughts which they know to be good. You keep pushing out of your mind the thoughts which you believe to be evil. They do it, because they want to avoid effort. You do it because you won't permit yourself to consider any thing that would spare you. They indulge their emotions at any cost. You sacrifice your emotions as the first cost of any problem. They are willing to bear nothing. You are willing to bear anything. They keep evading responsibility. You keep assuming it. But don't you see that the essential error is the same? Any refusal to recognize reality for any reason whatever, has disastrous consequences. There are no evil thoughts except one: the refusal to think. Don't ignore your own desires, Mr. Rearden. Don't sacrifice them. Examine their cause. There is a limit to how much you should have to bear."

"How did you know this about me?"

"I made the same mistake, once. But not for long."

"I wish—" Rearden began and stopped abruptly.

Rearden looked at him, bewildered. "No."

Some day, you'll know what treason I'm committing right now but Don't ever buy any d'Anconia Copper stock. Don't ever deal with d'Anconia Copper in any way."

"Why?"

"When you'll learn the full reason, you'll know whether there's ever been anything—or anyone—that meant a damn to me, and how much he did mean."

Rearden frowned. He had remembered something. "I wouldn't of the dou growing rich"

cleared his face back into his look of assurance. "Did you think that"

"as I who wheedled those directives out of the robber plan?"

"If not, then who did it?"

"My hitchhikers."

"Without your consent?"

"Without my knowledge."

"I'd hate to admit how much I want to believe you—but there's way for you to prove it now."

"No? I'll prove it to you within the next fifteen minutes."

"How? The fact remains that you've profited the most from those activities."

"That's true. I've profited more than Mr Mouch and his gang I'd ever imagine. After my years of work, they gave me just the pace I needed."

"Are you boasting?"

"You bet I am!" Rearden saw incredulously that Francisco's eyes had a hard, bright look, the look, not of a party hound but of a man of action. "Mr Rearden, do you know where most of those aristocrats keep their hidden money? Do you know where most of the fair-share vultures have invested their profits from Rearden Metal?"

"No, but—"

"In D'Anconia Copper stock. Safely out of the way and out of the country D'Anconia Copper—an old invulnerable company, rich that it would last for three more generations of looting. A company managed by a decadent playboy who doesn't give a damn, who'll let them use his property in any way they please and just allows him to make money for them—automatically as did his ancestors. Wasn't that a perfect setup for the looters Mr Rearden? Why—what one single point did they miss?"

Rearden was staring at him. "What are you driving at?"

Francisco laughed suddenly. "It's too bad about those profiteers."

Rearden Metal. You wouldn't want them to lose the money you made for them, would you, Mr Rearden? But accidents do happen in the world—you know what they say man is only a helpless thing at the mercy of nature's disasters. For instance there was fire at the port of the port

... .. of the port  
... .. by my tenses?

... .. he D'Anconia

mines at Orán—no lives lost no casualties except the mines themselves. It will be found that the mines are done for because they had been worked in the wrong places for months—what can we expect from a playboy's management? The great deposits of copper will be buried under tons of mountain where a Sebastian D'Anconia would not be able to reclaim them in less than three years, and a People's State will never reclaim them at all. When the stockholders begin to look into things they will find that the mines at Campos at San Félix, at Las Heras have been worked in exactly the same manner and have been running at a loss for a year, only the playboy juggled the books and kept it out

the newspapers Shall I tell you what they will discover about the  
management of the fleet?  
anyway  
tomorrow  
crashes  
all over the gutters!

so

ha

co

that was left, as at the awakening from a narcotic was the feeling  
that he had known some immense kind of freedom never to be  
matched in reality This was like the Wyatt fire again, he thought,  
this was his secret danger

He found himself backing away from Francisco d'Anconia Francisco  
stood watching him intently and looked as if he had been  
watching him all through that unknown length of time.

"There are no evil thoughts Mr Rearden" Francisco said softly  
"except one the refusal to think."

"No" said Rearden "it was almost a whisper he had to keep his  
voice down he was afraid that he would hear himself scream it,  
no if this is the key to you no don't expect me to cheer  
you you didn't have the strength to fight them you  
chose the easiest most vicious way deliberate destruction  
the destruction of an achievement you hadn't produced and couldn't  
match

"That's not what you'll read in the newspapers tomorrow There  
won't be any evidence of deliberate destruction Everything hap-  
pened in the normal explicable justifiable course of plain incom-  
petence. Incompetence isn't supposed to be punished nowadays is  
it? The boys in Buenos Aires and the boys in Santiago will prob-  
ably want to hand me a reward."

There's still a great part  
though a great part of  
I've done it intentionall

"I think you're the guiltiest man in this room" said Rearden  
quietly wearily even the fire of his anger was gone he felt noth-  
ing but the emptiness left by the death of a great hope. "I think  
you're worse than anything I had supposed."

Francisco looked at him with a strange half-smile of serenity  
the serenity of a victory over pain and did not answer

It was their silence that let them hear the voices of the two  
men who stood a few steps away and they turned to look at the  
speakers

The stocky elderly man was obviously a businessman of the con-  
scientious unspectacular kind His formal dress suit was of good  
quality but of a cut fashionable twenty years before with the  
faintest tinge of green at the seams he had had few occasions to  
wear it His shirt studs were ostentatiously too large but it was the

etic ostentation of an heirloom, intricate pieces of old fashioned workmanship, that had probably come to him through four generations, like his business. His face had the expression which, these days, was the mark of an honest man, an expression of bewilderment. He was looking at his companion, trying hard—conscientiously, helplessly, hopelessly—to understand.

"The stock complaint nowadays, it's the usual thing to people whose profits are squeezed a little. I don't know, we'll have to see, we'll have to decide whether we'll permit you to make any profits or not."

Rearden glanced at Francisco—and saw a face that went beyond

glad that you came to this party. I want you to see this "

Then, raising his voice, Francisco said suddenly, in the gay, loose, piercing tone of a man of complete irresponsibility, "You won't grant me that loan, Mr. Rearden? It puts me on a terrible spot. I must get the money—I must raise it tonight—I must raise it before the Stock Exchange opens in the morning, because otherwise—"

He did not have to continue, because the little man with the mustache was clutching at his arm.

Rearden had never believed that a human body could change dimensions within one's sight, but he saw the man shrinking in weight, in posture, in form, as if the air were let out of his lumps, and what had been an arrogant ruler was suddenly a piece of scrap that could not be a threat to anyone.

"Is . . . is there something wrong, Señor d'Anconia? I mean, on . . . on the Stock Exchange?"

Francisco jerked his finger to his lips, with a frightened glance. "Keep quiet," he whispered. "For God's sake, keep quiet!"

The man was shaking. "Something's . . . wrong?"

"You don't happen to own any d'Anconia Copper stock, do you?"  
"No, that's too bad! Well, word of honor that you to start a panic."

"What you'd better do is run to your stockbroker and sell as fast as you can—because things haven't been going too well for d'Anconia Copper, I'm trying to raise some money, but if I don't succeed, you'll be lucky if you'll have ten cents on your dollar tomorrow morning—oh my! I forgot that you can't reach your

stockbroker before tomorrow morning—well, it's too bad but—"  
The man was running across the room pushing people out of his way, like a torpedo shot into the crowd.

"Watch," said Francisco austerely, turning to Rearden.

The man was lost in the crowd, they could not see him, they could not tell to whom he was talking, whether he had

then like the accelerating branching that runs through a wall about to crumble the streaks of emptiness slashed, not by a human touch but by the impersonal breath of terror.

They knew that nothing was happening.

They were running out, running to telephones, running to one another, clutching or pushing the bodies around them at random. These men, the most powerful men in the country, those who held unanswerable to any power the power over every man's food and every man's enjoyment of his span of years on earth—these men had become a pile of rubble, clattering in the wind of panic the rubble left of a structure when its key pillar has been cut.

James Taggart, his face indecent in its exposure of emotions which centuries had taught men to keep hidden, rushed up to Francisco and screamed, "Is it true?"

"Why, James," said Francisco smiling, "what's the matter? Why do you seem to be upset? Money is the root of all evil—so I just got tired of being evil."

Taggart ran toward the main exit, yelling something to Orren Boyle on the way. Boyle nodded and kept on nodding with the eagerness and humility of an inefficient servant, then darted off in another direction. Cheryl, her wedding veil coiling like a crystal cloud upon the air as she ran after him, caught Taggart at the door. "Jim, what's the matter?" He pushed her aside and she fell against the stomach of Paul Larkin, as Taggart rushed out.

Three persons stood immovably still like three pillars spaced through the room, the lines of their sight cutting across the spread of the wreckage. Daguy, looking at Francisco—Francisco and Rearden looking at each other.

What time is it?

is running out, thought Rearden—but he answered, "I don't know. Not yet midnight," and remembering his wrist watch, added, "Twenty of."

"I'm going to take a train home," said Lillian

He heard the sentence, but it had to wait its turn to enter the crowded passages in his consciousness. He stood looking absently at the living room of his suite, a few minutes' elevator ride away from the party. In a moment, he answered automatically, 'At this rate'

"It's still early. There are plenty of trains running."

"You're welcome to stay here, of course."

'No, I think I prefer to go home.' He did not argue. 'What about it, Henry? Do you intend going home tonight?'

"No." He added, "I have business appointments here tomorrow."  
"As you wish."

[illegible]

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1037.

"Certainly, there's a limit to the negligence a man can permit himself!" He glanced at her face—it was oddly tense, the features upturned, making her look older. "He owed a certain duty to his stockholders, didn't he? . . . Didn't he, Henry?"

"Do you mind if we don't discuss it?"

She made a tightening, sidewise movement with her lips, the equivalent of a shrug, and walked into the bedroom.

He stood at the window, looking down at the streaming roofs of automobiles, letting his eyes rest on something while his faculty of sight was disconnected. His mind was still focused on the crowd in the ballroom downstairs and on two figures in that crowd. But as the living room remained on the edge of his vision so the sense of the action he had to perform remained on the edge of his consciousness. He had to go down. He had to go down.

there  
range  
ment

came out, as trimly groomed as she had arrived in a beige traveling suit outlining her figure with efficient tightness the hat tilted over half a head of hair set in waves. She carried her suitcase, swinging it a little, as if in demonstration of her ability to carry it.

He reached over mechanically and took the suitcase out of her and

"What are you doing?" she asked.

399

"Like this? You haven't changed your clothes"

"It doesn't matter."

"You don't have to escort me. I'm quite able to find my own way. If you have business appointments tomorrow, you'd better go to bed."

He did not answer, but walked to the door, held it open for her and followed her to the elevator.

They remained silent when they rode in a taxicab to the station. At such moments as he remembered her presence, he noticed that she sat efficiently straight, almost flaunting the perfection of her poise, she seemed alertly awake and contented, as if she were starting out on a purposeful journey of early morning.

The cab stopped at the entrance to the Taggart Terminal. The

month?"

"I'll telephone you," he said

She waved her gloved hand at him and disappeared into the light of the entrance. As the cab started forward, he gave the driver the address of Dagny's apartment.

The apartment was dark when he entered, but the door to her bedroom was half-open and he heard her voice saying, "Hello, Hank." He walked in, asking, "Were you asleep?"

No. 10.

He switched on the light. She lay in bed, her head propped by the pillow, her hair falling smoothly to her shoulders, as if she had not moved for a long time; but her face was untroubled. She looked like a schoolgirl, with the tailored collar of a pale blue nightgown lying severely high at the base of her throat; the nightgown's front was a deliberate contrast to the severity, a spread of pale blue embroidery that looked like a child's drawing.

that looked -  
wanted - + good -  
forehead, low  
iderness, in th  
this adversar  
ngth, but wh

"You're carrying so much," he said, "and it's I who make it harder for you . . ."

"No, Hank was drunk -" but





"You wouldn't hate it?"

I'd hate it more than I can tell you. But if that were your choice I would accept it. I want you, Hank.

He took her hand and raised it to his lips. She felt the momentary struggle in his body in the sudden movement with which he came down half-collapsing and let his mouth cling to her shoulder. Then he pulled her forward. He pulled the length of her body in the pale blue nightgown to lie stretched across his knees, he held it with them.

He  
had  
always to  
betrayed

She said  
her "No, Hank," she said, her face hard.

The brief taut movement of his lips was a smile. "I know that you won't answer it, but I won't stop asking—because that is what I'll never accept."

"Ask yourself why you won't accept it."

He answered, his hand moving slowly from her breasts to her knees as if stressing his ownership and hating it. "Because the things you've permitted me to do. I didn't think you could, not ever, not even for me, but to find that you did, and more that you had permitted another man had wanted him to have—"

"Do you understand what you're saying? That you've never accepted my wanting you either—you've never accepted that I should want you just as I should have wanted him once?"

He said, his voice low: "That's true."

She tore herself away from him with a brusque twisting movement. She stood up but she stood looking down at him with a  
"real guilt  
to enjoy  
You've

"He said that, too."

"Who?"

"Francisco d'Ancona."

He wondered why he had the impression that the name shocked her and that she answered an instant too late. "He said that to you?"

"We were talking about quite a different subject."

In a moment she said calmly: "I saw you talking to him. Which one of you?"

"We were."

"I think  
for some

"I know he has. Still, what do you think of him as a person?"

"I don't know. I ought to think that he's the most depraved person I've ever met."

"You ought to? But you don't?"

I can't quite make myself feel certain of it"  
smiled "That's what's strange about him I know that he's a  
loafer, a cheap playboy, the most viciously irresponsible

"—I think I have" He smiled. "Why does it frighten you?"  
"Because . . . because I think he's going to hurt you in some  
way . . . and the more you see in him the harder it will  
be to bear . . . and it will take you a long time to get over it, if

I feel that I ought to warn you against him, but I can't  
because I'm certain of nothing about him, not even whether he's

"The thing is what he does make me feel."

"What?"

"Hope."

black  
Dagny  
house

Through a gray drizzle of rain, the calendar above the roofs said  
September 3 and a clock on another tower said 10 40 as Rearden  
sat sitting

Rearden leaned wearily against the seat the disaster seemed to be no more than a stale news story read long ago. He felt nothing except an uncomfortable sense of impropriety at finding himself in the morning streets, dressed in evening clothes. He felt no desire to return from the world he had left to the world he saw drizzle past the windows of the taxi.

He turned the key in the door of his hotel suite, hoping to get back to a desk as fast as possible and have to see nothing more of him.

They hit his consciousness together: the breakfast table—the door to his bedroom, open upon the sight of a bed that had been slept in—and Lillian's voice saying, "Good morning, Henry."

She sat in an armchair, wearing the same dress she had worn yesterday without

There was a cigar

As I came down

thing, Henry?

He stood like a man in military uniform at some official proceedings where emotions could not be permitted to exist. "It is for me to speak."

"Aren't you going to try to justify yourself?"

"No."

"A . . ."

for . . .

S . . .

chair's back. Didn't you expect to be caught, sooner or later?

she asked "If a man like you stays pure as a monk for over a year, didn't you think that was a little bit funny, though,

from getting on

the breakfast table. I am certain that you weren't going to be

here, last night. And it wasn't difficult or expensive at all to find out

from a hotel employee, this morning, that you haven't spent a night in these rooms in the past year."

He said nothing.

"The man of stainless steel!" She laughed. "The man of achievement and honor who's on the list of the great ones."

. . .

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. . .

"And I won't answer."

he shrugged "I suppose it makes no difference There's only one standard type for the one standard purpose I've always known that her that ascetic look of yours you were a plain, crude sensualist sought nothing from a woman except an animal satisfaction which I pride myself on not having given you I knew that your inflated sense of honor would collapse some day and you would be down to the lowest, cheapest type of female, just like any other catering husband" She chuckled "That great admirer of yours,

that they seek in most notoriously *not* brains I knew your real nature and inclinations Didn't I?" He said nothing Do you know what I think of you now?"

"You have the right to condemn me in any way you wish" She laughed. "The great man who was so contemptuous—in business—of weaklings who trimmed corners or fell by the wayside, because they couldn't match his strength of character and steadfastness of purpose! How do you feel about it now?"

"My feelings need not concern you You have the right to decide what you wish me to do I will agree to any demand you make, except one don't ask me to give it up"

"Oh, I wouldn't ask you to give it up! I wouldn't expect you to

"I said what you thought, why did you stay with me?" She answered severely, "It's a question you have lost the right to ask."

"That's true" he said, thinking that only one conceivable reason, her love for him, could justify her answer

"No, I'm not going to divorce you Do you suppose that I will allow your romance with a floozie to deprive me of my home my name, my social position? I shall preserve such pieces of my life as I can, whatever does not rest on so shoddy a foundation as your ideal of marriage — you married"

why don't you sit down?"

He remained standing "Please say what you have to say" "I will not consider any unofficial divorce such as a separation"

You may continue your love idyll in the subways and basements

officially yours, but will now be mine."

If you wish "

She leaned back loosely, in a manner of untidy relaxation, her legs spread apart, her arms resting in two strict parallels on the arms of the chair--like a judge who could permit himself to be sloppy

ing whatever you wish by the simple means of your money. You cannot conceive of things that are non-commercial, non negotiable, non subject to any kind of trade. You're unable to believe that there may exist a person who feels no concern for money. You cannot imagine what *that* means. Well, I think you're going to learn. Oh yes, of course you'll agree to any demand I make, from now on I want you to sit in that office of which you're so proud, in those precious mills of yours, and play the hero who works eighteen hours a day, the giant of industry who keeps the whole country going, the genius who is above the common herd of whining, lying, chiseling humanity. Then I want you to come home and face the only person who knows you for what you really are, who knows the actual value of your word, of your honor, of your integrity, of your vaunted self esteem. I want you to face, in your own home, the one person who despises you and has the right to do so. I want you to look at me whenever you build another furnace, or pour another record breaking load of steel, or hear applause and admiration whenever you feel proud of yourself, whenever you feel clean whenever you feel drunk on the sense of your own greatness. I want you to look at me whenever you hear of some act of depravity, I feel anger at human corruption, or feel contempt for someone knavery, or are the victim of a new governmental extortion--to look and to know that you're no better, that you're superior to no one but that there's

I want you to build a wall around yourself!

pulling

Somewhere outside of him and apart, as if he were reading in a brain not his own, he observed the thought that there was something wrong in the scheme of the punishment she wanted him to be something wrong by its own terms, aside from its propriety, justice, some practical miscalculation that would demolish it if discovered. He did not attempt to discover it. The thought was by as a moment's notation, made in cold curiosity, to be brought back in some distant future. There was nothing within him that

ut he saw no evidence of pain in her manner. Then perhaps the  
piness was the only means she could summon to hide it, he

"Then you had better take the train home now."

ut a sense that married this way — — — if con-  
ded of

well, Mr. Rearden," he said, by way of greeting. I didn't know  
at even a hardened — — —  
ands,  
ion, by  
"How

Dr. Ferris sat down and made a few remarks about the colors of  
leaves in the month of October, as he had observed them by the  
padside on his long drive from Washington, undertaken specifically  
or the purpose of meeting Mr. Rearden in person. Rearden said  
nothing. Dr. Ferris — — — commented on the  
were one of the  
ry  
year and a half

Dr. Ferris gave a brief frown, as if a dot of the pattern had slipped  
nd almost cost him the game, then chuckled, as if he had recap-  
ured it. "That was a year and a half ago, Mr. Rearden," he said  
nally. "Times change, and people change with the times—the wise  
nes do. Wisdom lies in knowing when to remember and when to  
orget. Consistency is not a habit of mind which it is wise to prac-  
ice or to expect of the human race."

He then proceeded to discourse upon the foolishness of consistency in a world where nothing was absolute except the principle of compromise. He talked earnestly, but in a casual manner as both understood that this was not the main subject of their interview yet oddly he spoke not in the tone of a foreword but in the tone of a postscript, as if the main subject had been settled long ago.

Rearden waited for the first. "Don't you think so?" and answered. "Please state the urgent matter for which you requested this appointment."

Dr Ferris looked astonished and blank for a moment, then as brightly as if remembering an unimportant subject which could be disposed of without effort. "Oh that? That was in regard to the dates of delivery of Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute. We should like to have five thousand tons by the first of December and then we'll be quite agreeable to waiting for the balance of the order until after the first of the year."

Rearden sat looking at him silently for a long time. Each passing moment had the effect of making the gay intonations of Dr Ferris' voice still hanging in the air of the room, seem more foolish. When Dr Ferris had begun to dread that he would not answer, all Rearden answered. "Hasn't the traffic cop with the leather leggings whom you sent here, given you a report on his conversation with me?"

"Why yes Mr Rearden but—"

"What else do you want to hear?"

"But that was five months ago Mr Rearden. A certain event has taken place since which makes me quite sure that you have changed your mind and that you will make no trouble for us at all just now. We will make no trouble for you."

"What event?"

"An event of which you have far greater knowledge than I—by you see I do have knowledge of it, even though you would much prefer me to have none."

"What event?"

"Since it is your secret Mr Rearden why not let it remain a secret? Who doesn't have secrets nowadays? For instance Project X is a secret. You realize of course that we could obtain your Metal simply by having it purchased in smaller quantities by various government offices who would then transfer it to us—and I would not be able to prevent it. But this would necessitate our letting a lot of lousy bureaucrats—Dr Ferris smiled with disarmingly frankness—oh yes we are as unpopular with one another as we are with you private citizens—it would necessitate our letting a lot of other bureaucrats in on the secret of Project X which would be highly undesirable at this time. And so would any newspaper publicity about the Project—if we put you on trial for refusal to comply with a government order. But if you had to stand trial on another much more serious charge where Project X and the State Science Institute were not involved and where you could not raise any real principle or arouse any public sympathy—why, that would be

convenience us at all, but it would cost you more than you would  
ire to contemplate. Therefore, the only practical thing for you to  
is to help me keep — — — — —  
c

urse," said Dr Ferris lightly.

Rearden did not answer.

"Issues of principle are such a nuisance," said Dr Ferris, smiling,  
and such a waste of time for all concerned. Now would you care to  
be a martyr for an issue of principle, only in circumstances where  
nobody will know that that's what you are—nobody but you and  
me—where you won't get a chance to breathe a word about the issue  
of the principle—where you won't be a hero, the creator of a  
spectacular new metal, making a stand against enemies whose actions  
might appear somewhat shabby in the eyes of the public—where  
you won't be a hero, but a common criminal, a greedy industrialist  
who's cheated the law for a plain motive of profit, a racketeer of  
the black market who's broken the national regulations designed  
to protect the public welfare—a hero without glory and without  
public, who'll accomplish no more than about half a column of  
newsprint somewhere on page five—now would you still care to be  
that kind of martyr? Because that's just what the issue amounts to  
now: either you let us have the Metal or you go to jail for ten  
years and take your friend Danagger along, too."

As a biologist, Dr Ferris had always been fascinated by the  
theory that animals had the capacity to smell fear, he had tried to  
develop a similar capacity in himself. Watching Rearden, he con-  
cluded that the man had long since decided to give in—because  
he caught no trace of any fear.

"Who was your informer?" asked Rearden.

"One of your friends, Mr Rearden. The owner of a copper mine  
in Arizona, who reported to us that you had purchased an extra  
amount of copper last month, above the regular tonnage required  
or the monthly quota of Rearden Metal which the law permits you  
to produce. Copper is one of the ingredients of Rearden Metal, isn't  
it? That was all the information we needed. The rest was easy to  
trace. You mustn't blame that mine owner too much. The copper  
producers, as you know, are being squeezed so badly right now  
that the man had to offer something of value in order to obtain a  
favor, an 'emergency need' ruling which suspended a few of the  
directives in his case and gave him a little breathing spell. The  
w — — —

of your life, are now in my possession—and I am offering  
you a trade. I'm sure you won't object, since trade is your specialty.  
The form may be a little different from what it was in your youth—  
but you're a smart trader, you've always known how to take ad-



a much more realistic age"

But there was a peculiar difference, thought Rearden, between the manner of a plain blackmailer and that of Dr. Ferris. A blackmailer would show signs of gloating over his victim's sin and acknowledge a sense of duty. His manner

suggested a sense of safety, it held no tone of condemnation, but a hint of comradeship, a comradeship based—for both of them—on self-contempt. The sudden feeling that made Rearden lean forward in a posture of eager attentiveness, was the feeling that he was about to discover another step along his half-glumpled trail.

Seeing Rearden's look of interest, Dr. Ferris smiled and congratulated himself on having caught the right key. The game was clear to him now, the markings of the pattern were falling in the right order, some men, thought Dr. Ferris, would do anything as long as it was left unnamed, but this man wanted frankness, it was the tough realist he had been noted as being.

"I see."

Why

than most of us

a long time, and

with Jim Taggart

Taggart, he's not

ren Boyle

him down

gger in line

Look, how impractical you've been about that, I know why you sold him the Metal—it's because you need him to get coal from

people like Ralph Eubank—and be yourself. Come down to  
You're not the man who'd let sentiment interfere with busi-

ness," said Rearden slowly, "I wouldn't. Not any kind of senti-

ment. Ferris smiled. "Don't you suppose we knew it?" he said, his  
suggestion that he was letting his patent leather hair down to  
pass a fellow criminal by a display of superior cunning. "We've  
had a long time to get something on you. You honest men are  
a problem and such a headache. But we knew you'd slip  
\* we wanted."

your laws?"  
"Well, what do you think they're for?"

Ferris did not notice the sudden look on Rearden's face, the  
look of a man hit by the first vision of that which he had sought to  
Dr. Ferris was past the stage of seeing, he was intent upon de-  
livering the last blows to an animal caught in a trap.

"Did you really think that we want those laws to be observed?"

Dr. Ferris. "We want them broken. You'd better get it straight  
it's not a bunch of boy scouts you're up against—then you'll  
see that this is not the age for beautiful gestures. We're after  
power and we mean it. You fellows were pikers, but we know the  
trick, and you'd better get wise to it. There's no way to rule  
scent men. The only power any government has is the power to  
keep down on criminals. Well, when there aren't enough criminals,  
makes them. One declares so many things to be a crime that it  
becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws. Who  
keeps a nation of law-abiding citizens? What's there in that for  
one? But just pass the kind of laws that can neither be observed  
enforced nor objectively interpreted—and you create a nation  
of law-breakers—and then you cash in on guilt. Now that's the  
game, Mr. Rearden, that's the game, and once you understand it,  
it'll be much easier to deal with."

Watching Dr. Ferris watch him, Rearden saw the sudden twitch  
of anxiety, the look that precedes panic, as if a clean card had fallen  
from the table from a deck Dr. Ferris had never seen before.

What Dr. Ferris was seeing in Rearden's face was the look of  
troubled serenity that comes from the sudden answer to an old,  
long problem, a look of relaxation and eagerness together, there was  
a youthful clarity in Rearden's eyes and the faintest touch of con-  
tempt in the line of his mouth. Whatever this meant—and Dr. Fer-  
riss could not decipher it—he was certain of one thing: the face held  
signs of guilt.

"There's a flaw in your system, Dr. Ferris," Rearden said quietly,  
most lightly, "a practical flaw which you will discover when you  
come on trial for selling four thousand tons of Rearden Metal to  
the Danagger."

It took twenty seconds—Rearden could feel them moving past

slowly—at the end of which Dr Ferris became convinced that he had heard Rearden's final decision.

"Do you think we're bluffing?" snapped Dr Ferris, his voice suddenly had the quality of the animals he had spent so much time studying—it sounded as if he were baring his teeth.

"I don't know," said Rearden. "I don't care, one way or the other."

"Are you going to be as impractical as that?"

"The evaluation of an action as 'practical,' Dr Ferris, depends on what it is that one wishes to practice."

"Haven't you always placed your self-interest above all else?"

"That is what I am doing right now."

"If you think we'll let you get away with a—"

"You will now please get out of here."

"Whom do you think you're fooling?" Dr Ferris' voice had risen close to the edge of a scream. "The day of the barons of industry done! You've got the goods, but we've got the goods on you and you're going to play it our way or you'll—"

Rearden had pressed a button, Miss Ives entered the office.

"Dr Ferris has become confused and has lost his way, Miss Ives," said Rearden. "Will you escort him out please?" He turned to Ferris. "Miss Ives is a woman, she weighs about a hundred pounds, and she has no practical qualifications at all, only a superlative intellectual efficiency. She would never do for a bouncer in a saloon, only in an impractical place, such as a factory."

Miss Ives looked as if she was performing a duty of no great moment.

1

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1

She came back a few minutes later, laughing in uncontrollable exultation.

"Mr Rearden," she asked, laughing at her fear for him, at the danger, at everything but the triumph of the moment, "what are you're doing?"

He sat in a pose he had never permitted himself before, a pose he had resented as the most vulgar symbol of the businessman—he leaning back in his chair, with his feet on his desk—and it seemed to her that the posture had an air of peculiar nobility, that it was not the pose of a stuffy executive, but of a young crusader.

"I think I'm discovering a new continent, Gwen," he answered cheerfully. "A continent that should have been discovered along with America, but wasn't."

\* \* \*

"I have to speak of it to you," said Eddie Willers, looking at the worker across the table. "I don't know why it helps me, but it does—just to know that you're hearing me."

It was late and the lights of the underground cafeteria were low, but Eddie Willers could see the worker's eyes looking at him intently.

"I feel as if . . . as if there's no people and no human language."

" said Eddie Willers "I feel that if I were to scream in the middle of the streets, there would be no one to hear it. . . No, that's quite what I feel, it's this I feel that someone *is* screaming in middle of the streets, but people are passing by and no sound reach them—and it's not Hank Rearden or Ken Danagger or I *is* screaming and yet it seems as if it's all three of us . . . don't you see that somebody should have risen to defend them, but nobody has or will? Rearden and Danagger were indicted this morn-

..

don't say a word, he just stood there, as if the room were empty. The newspapers are saying that both of them should be thrown jail. No . . . no, I'm not shaking, I'm all right, I'll be all right in a moment . . . That's why I haven't said a word to her, I was afraid I'd explode and I didn't want to make it harder for her, now how she feels . . . Oh yes, she spoke to me about it, and

was that there's something like a shift of stress involved—elemental—  
at the moment

ice then, she says, it's been as if the center of gravity were awing wildly—like in a sinking cargo ship out of control—shifting from industry to industry, from man to man. When we lose one, another becomes that much more desperately needed—and he's the one we lose next. Well, what could be a greater disaster now than have the country's coal supply left in the hands of men like Boyle Larkin? And there's no one left in the coal industry who amounts much, . . . he feels almost as if he's waiting for the sound of a gun, you bet. . . er thing involved stage—not anger both—before he knew long before

and this Wyatt had remained that stage and something would happen to him. When she saw Ken Danagger in the courtroom today, she said that he was ready for the destroyer . . .

thinks there's a system behind it, all this destroying  
destroyer loose in the country, who's cutting down the buttresses one  
after another to let the structure collapse upon our heads. Some  
She  
ing  
III  
not

afraid for Danagger, terribly afraid . . . No. She knows  
about the destroyer. She has no clue to his identity, no evidence of  
his existence—except the trail of destruction. But she feels certain  
that he exists. No, she cannot guess his purpose. She says that

There are times when she feels  
the world  
found the  
ive her life  
because he's

the most evil creature that's ever existed, the man who's draining the  
brains of the world. I guess it's getting to be too much for  
her, at times—even for her. I don't think she allows herself to  
know how tired she is. The other morning, I came to work very  
early and I found her asleep on the couch in her office, with the  
light still burning on her desk. She'd been there all night. I

Wakened her. If the whole  
p? Why, she  
told that about  
her, as if she

had nothing to hide or to fear. That's what was terrible—that god-  
less purity of her face, with her body twisted by exhaustion, as  
lying there as she had collapsed. She looked—say, why should you  
ask me what she looks like when she's asleep? . . . Yes, you  
right, why do I talk about it? I shouldn't. I don't know what makes  
me think of it. Don't pay any attention to me. I'll be all right

tomorrow. I guess it's just that I'm sort of shell-shocked by the  
courtroom. I keep thinking of men like Rearden and Danagger  
working in a

enough  
n—  
wh—  
I th  
yone

defend them?

"Mr. Danagger will be free in a moment, Miss Taggart. He has a  
visitor in his office. Will you excuse me, please?" said the secretary.

Through the two hours of her flight to Pittsburgh, Dagny had been  
sely unable to justify her anxiety or to dismiss it, there was no  
son to count minutes, yet she had felt a blind desire to hurry.  
Anxiety vanished when she entered the anteroom of Ken  
nagger's office she had reached him, nothing had happened to  
vent it, she felt safety, confidence and an enormous sense of  
relief.

The words of the secretary demolished it. You're becoming a  
ward—thought Dagny, feeling a causeless jolt of dread at the

the  
as a

mall

the mine doorways  
the flaming leaves  
Starnesville

She noticed that there was only a stub left of the cigarette be-  
tween her fingers. She lighted another.

When she glanced at the clock on the wall of the anteroom, she  
saw the secretary glancing at it at the same time. Her appointment  
was for three o'clock; the white dial said 3 12.

"Please forgive it, Miss Taggart," said the secretary. Mr. Danag-  
ger will be through, any moment now. Mr. Danagger is extremely  
particular about his appointments. Please believe me that this is un-  
precedented."

"I know it." She knew that Ken Danagger was as rigidly exact  
about his schedule as a railroad timetable and that he had been  
known to cancel an interview if a caller permitted himself to arrive  
even a minute late.

The secretary was an elderly spinster with a forbidding manner  
and a manner of even-toned courtesy impervious to any shock, just as  
her spotless white blouse was impervious to an atmosphere filled  
with coal dust. Dagny thought it strange that a hardened, well-  
trained woman of this type should appear to be nervous. She volun-  
teered no conversation, she sat still, bent over some pages of paper

on her desk. Half of Dagny's cigarette had gone in smoke, while the woman still sat looking at the same page.

When she raised her head to glance at the clock, the dial said 3 30 "I know that this is inexcusable, Miss Taggart." The note of apprehension was obvious in her voice now. "I am unable to understand it."

under any circumstances or for any reason whatever."

"When did he do that?"

The moment's pause was like a small air cushion for the answer "Two hours ago."

never have permitted this to happen."

The door was not locked, thought Dagny, she felt an unreasonable desire to tear it open and walk in—it was only a few wooden boards with a brass knob, it would require only a small muscular contraction of her arm—but she looked away, knowing that the power of more impregn-

arettes in the ad  
ier a sharper fee  
- was thinking c  
Hugh Akston she had written to him, at his diner in Wyoming asking him to tell her where he had obtained the cigarette with the dollar sign, her letter had come back, with a postal inscription to inform her that he had forwarded address the pre her has rette still

As she looked up, her eyes met the glance of the secretary waiting her. "I am sorry, Miss Taggart. I don't know what to do about it." It was an openly desperate plea. "I don't dare interrupt."

Dagny asked slowly "What is the office etiquette?" the gentle Dagny's eyes a Ger "

Dagny asked slowly "What is the office etiquette?"

d that this was an appointment which Mr Danagger had made

ively, in the tone  
ng at the age of

After another silence, she added, "An strange thing is that  
years old. He seems to

only had been silent for a long time, and the hands of the dial  
re approaching 3.50 when the buzzer rang on the secretary's  
sk—the bell from Danagger's office, the signal of permission to  
ter.

Then both turned to the door and the secretary rushed forward,

exit door  
he knock

door against the jamb and the faint image of the glass panel  
She saw the man who had left, by his reflection on Ken Danag-  
r's face. It was not the face she had seen in the courtroom, it was  
the face she had known for years as a countenance of unchang-  
& unfeeling rigidity—it was a face which a young man of twenty  
ould hope for, but could not achieve, a face from which every  
of strain had been wiped out, so that the lined cheeks, the  
eased forehead, the graying hair—like elements rearranged by a  
w theme—were made to form a composition of hope, eagerness  
and guileless serenity: the theme was deliverance.

He did not rise when she entered—he looked as if he had not  
quite returned to the reality of the moment and had forgotten the  
proper routine—but he smiled at her with such simple benevolence

"think-  
er—  
well

think  
the

"I don't mind waiting," she said "I'm grateful that you gave me  
his appointment. I was extremely anxious to speak to you on a  
matter of urgent importance."

He leaned forward across the desk, with a look of attentive con-  
centration on his face, "What is it?"  
was a  
had



He looked at her in silence, and then he said "Miss Taggart this is such a beautiful day—probably the last, this year. There's nothing I've always wanted to do, but never had time for it. Let's go back to New York together and take one of those excursions on the boat trips around the island of Manhattan. Let's take a last look at the greatest city in the world."

She sat still, trying to hold her eyes fixed in order to stop the office from swaying. This was the Ken Danagger who had never in his personal life had never married, had never attended a play or a movie, had never permitted anyone the impertinence of taking time for any concern but business.

"Mr. Danagger, I came here to speak to you about a matter of crucial importance to the future of your business and mine. I came to speak to you about your indictment."

"Oh, that? Don't worry about that. It doesn't matter. I'm going to retire."

She sat still, feeling nothing, wondering numbly whether this was how it felt to hear a death sentence one had dreaded but never quite believed possible.

Her first movement was a sudden jerk of her head toward the exit door. She asked her voice low, her mouth distorted by hatred. "Who was he?"

Danagger laughed. "If you've guessed that much, you should have guessed that it's a question I won't answer."

"Oh God, Ken Danagger!" she moaned. His words made her realize that the barrier of hopelessness, of silence of unanswered questions was already erected between them. The hatred had been only a thin wire that had held her for a moment and she broke it. "Its breaking. Oh God!"

"You're wrong, kid," he said gently. "I know how you feel. You're wrong." Then he added more formally, as if remembering proper manner, as if still trying to balance himself between two kinds of reality. "I'm sorry, Miss Taggart, that you had to come here so soon after."

"I came too late," she said. "That's what I came here to prove. I knew it would happen."

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Why?"

torment yourself with regrets about the things that could not have been done."

She felt that with every passing minute he was moving away from her.

ch him

she he

intense

voice

were

hours ago? Do you remember what your minutes meant to you?

I remember Taggart Transcontinental or Rearden Steel? In the  
-derstand?"

"Yes."  
"Why?"

"That, I won't answer."

"You, who loved your work, who respected nothing but work,  
who despised every kind of aimlessness, passivity and renunciation  
have you renounced the kind of life you loved?"

"No I have not."

"Are you going into the coal mining business somewhere else?"

"No, not into the coal mining business."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I haven't decided that yet."

"Where are you going?"

"I won't answer."

She gave herself a moment's pause, to gather her strength, to tell  
herself: Don't feel, don't show him that you feel anything, don't  
let a cloud and break the bridge—then she said, in the same quiet,  
even voice, "Do you realize what your retirement will do to Hank  
Rearden, to me, to all the rest of us, whoever is left?"

"Yes I realize it more fully than you do at present."

"And it is—"

"I am not sure of it and I will not explain, but I am not  
betting you."

"We're being left to carry a greater burden, and you're indiffer-  
ent to the knowledge that you'll see us destroyed by the looters."

"Don't be too sure of that."

"Of which? Your indifference or our destruction?"

"Of either."

"But you know, you knew it this morning, that it's a battle to the  
death, and it's we—you were one of us—against the looters."

"If I answer that I know it, but you don't—you'll think that I  
attach no meaning to my words. So take it as you wish but that is  
my answer."

"Will you tell me the meaning?"

"No. It's for you to discover."

"You're willing to—"

veyed the impression that there were no secrets any longer and mystery need ever have existed

But as she watched him she saw the first break in his yew calm she saw him struggling against some thought he best then said with effort About Hank Rearden Will you do a favor?

Of course

Will you tell him that I . . . You see I've never cared for people yet he was always the man I respected but I didn't know until today that what I felt was . . . that he was the only man ever loved Just tell him this and that I wish I could—no guess that's all I can tell him He'll probably damn me if leaving still maybe he won't

I'll tell him

Hearing the dulled hidden sound of pain in his voice she felt close to him that it seemed impossible he would deliver the blow she was delivering—and she made one last effort

Mr Danagger if I were to plead on my knees if I were to find some sort of words that I haven't found—would there be there a chance to stop you?

There isn't

After a moment she asked tonelessly When are you going?

Tonight

Why

don't

you

want

"You're not going to dispose of it or appoint a successor?"

No What for?

"To leave it in good hands Couldn't you at least name an heir of your own choice?"

I haven't any choice It doesn't make any difference to me Was me to leave it all to you? He reached for a sheet of paper "I'll write a letter naming you sole heiress right now if you want it to"

She shook her head in an involuntary recoil of horror "I'm not a looter"

He chuckled pushing the paper aside "You see? You gave the right answer whether you knew it or not Don't worry about Danagger Coal It won't make any difference whether I appoint the best successor in the world or the worst or none No matter who takes it over now whether men or weeds it won't make any difference"

But to walk off and abandon just abandon an industrial enterprise as if we were in the age of landless nomads or of savages wandering in the jungle?

"Aren't we?" He was smiling at her half in mockery half in compassion "Why should I leave a deed or a will? I don't want to help the looters to pretend that"

exists I am  
They do not  
know it"

"Am I?"

She moaned, looking at the exit door, "What has he done to you?"

"He told me that I had the right to exist."

"I didn't believe it possible that in three hours one could make a

She rose to her feet. She was about to speak—but suddenly he  
shut that stood

with the sign of

What's the matter, Miss Taggart?"

"Did he . . . did he smoke this?"

"Who?"

"Your caller—A. A. He — y — i — — —"

yes I think I did see  
see no that's not

"Will any other visitors in this office today?"

"No. But why, Miss Taggart? What's the matter?"

"May I take this?"

"What? The cigarette butt?" He stared at her in bewilderment.

"Yes."

"Why, sure—but what for?"

She was looking down at the butt in the palm of her hand as if it  
were a jewel. "I don't know. I don't know what good it will do  
me, except that it's a clue to"—she smiled bitterly—to a secret of  
my own."

She stood, reluctant to leave, looking at Ken Danagger in the  
realm of no return

I won't say good  
the not too distant

"Oh," she said eagerly, holding his hand clasped across the desk,  
"are you going to return?"

"No. You're going to join me."

There was only a faint red breath above the structures in the  
the human breath

only to the name . . .

ered half a mile of structures as if he were trying to hold them.  
He was looking at a long wall of vertical strips which was to  
h a brief gasp  
ig out smoothly  
It held still for  
the slice and

crumbled into a gondola waiting on the rails below

Danagger coal he thought These were the only words in his  
mind The rest was a feeling of loneliness so vast that even its own  
pain seemed swallowed in an enormous void

Yesterday Dagny had told him the story of her futile attempt and  
given him Danagger's message This morning he had heard the  
news that Danagger had disappeared Through his sleepless night  
then through the taut concentration on the duties of the day his  
answer to the message had kept beating in his mind the answer he  
would never have a chance to utter

The only man I ever loved It came from Ken Danagger, who  
had never expressed anything more personal than "Look here Rea-  
den" He thought Why had we let it go? Why had we both been  
condemned—in the hours away from our desks—to an exile among  
dreary strangers who had made us give up all desire for rest, for  
friendship for the sound of human voices? Could I now reclaim  
single hour spent listening to my brother Philip and give it to Ken  
Danagger? Who made it our duty to accept as the only reward for  
our work the gray torture of pretending love for those who rouse  
us to nothing but contempt? We who were able to melt rock and  
metal for our purpose why had we never sought that which we  
wanted from men?

He tried to choke the words in his mind knowing that it was  
useless to think of them now But the words were there and they  
were like words addressed to the dead No I don't damn you for  
leaving—if that is the question and the pain which you took away  
with you Why didn't you give me a chance to tell you what  
that I approve? no but that I can neither blame you nor  
follow you

Closing his eyes he permitted himself to experience for a moment  
the immense relief he would feel if he too were to walk off  
abandoning everything Under the shock of his loss he felt a thin  
thread of pain What did it mean? However they are  
o? Bu  
wou  
murder  
ke her

away from his mills

It was late his staff had gone but he dreaded the road to his  
house and the emptiness of the evening ahead He felt as if the  
enemy who had wiped out Ken Danagger was no for him as  
lnerat-  
ie from  
him

He looked at the glittering white splashes on the dark windows of  
structure in the distance, they were like motionless ripples of  
ed  
el.  
ive  
use

s to see?  
He thought—in bitter astonishment and for the first time—that  
joyous pride he had once felt, had come from his respect for  
1, for the value of their admiration and their judgment. He did  
feel it any longer. There were no men, he thought, to whose  
it he could wish to offer that sign.

ce  
He threw the door open—and stopped. A single lamp was burn-  
in a corner of the dimmed anteroom. The man who sat on the  
se of a desk, in a pose of casual, patient waiting, was Francisco  
Inconia.  
Rearden stood still and caught a brief instant when Francisco, not  
ring, looked at him with the hint of an amused smile that was  
e a wink between conspirators at a secret they both understood,

"For the same reason that has kept you so late in your office. You  
re not working."  
"How long have you been sitting here?"  
"An hour or two."  
"Why didn't you knock at my door?"  
"Would you have allowed me to come in?"  
"You're late in asking that question."  
"Shall I leave, Mr. Rearden?"  
Rearden pointed to the door of his office. "Come in."  
Turn no the t. . . . .

sat down on the edge of his desk, crossed his arms, and  
Francisco, who remained standing respectfully before him, and  
sked with the cold hint of a smile. "Why did you come here?"

You don't want me to answer, Mr. Rearden. You wouldn't ask me or to yourself how desperately lonely you are tonight if you don't question me. You won't feel obliged to deny it. Just answer what you do know anyway that I know it."

Taut like a string pulled by anger against the impertinence at end and by admiration for the frankness at the other, Rearden answered: "I'll admit it if you wish. What should it matter to me you know it?"

"That I know and care, Mr. Rearden. I'm the only man around you who does."

"Why should you care? And why should I need your help tonight?"

"Because it's not easy to have to damn the man who meant it to you."

"I wouldn't damn you if you'd only stay away from me."

Francisco's eyes widened a little, then he grinned and said: "Was speaking of Mr. Danagger?"

For an instant Rearden looked as if he wanted to slap his face, then he laughed softly and said, "All right. Sit down."

"You don't." The two words seemed to fall with a soft emphasis; they were pronounced very quietly, almost cautiously, with no remnant of a smile on Francisco's face.

"No. I don't try to prescribe how much a man should have to bear. If he broke, it's not for me to judge him."

"If he broke?"

"Well, didn't he?"

Rearden was not a bit

He looked at a steel bridge traced in black strokes against red steam beyond the window, and said, pointing: "Every one of those girders has a limit to the load it can carry. What's yours?"

Rearden laughed. "Is that what you're afraid of? Is that why you came here? Were you afraid I'd break? Did you want to save me? Dagny Taggart wanted to save Ken Danagger? She tried to reach him in time, but couldn't."

"She did? I didn't know it." Miss Taggart and I'd agree about many things."

"Don't worry. I'm not going to vanish. Let them all give up and stop working. I won't. I don't know my limit and don't care. All I have to know is that I can't be stopped."

"Any man can be stopped, Mr. Rearden."

"How?"

"It's only a matter of knowing man's motive power."

"What is it?"

"You ought to know, Mr. Rearden. You're one of the last good men left to the world."

Rearden chuckled in bitter amusement "I've been called just about everything but that And you're wrong You have no idea how young"

"Are you sure?"

"I ought to know Moral? What on earth made you say it?"

For a long moment, Rearden looked at him without moving, then he said only, "What do you mean?"

"If you want to see an abstract principle, such as moral action in material form—there it is. Look at it, Mr. Rearden. Every girder of every pipe, wire and valve was put there by a choice in answer to the question: right or wrong? You had to choose right and you had to choose the best within your knowledge—the best for your purpose, which was to make steel—and then move on and extend the knowledge, and do better, and still better, with your purpose as your standard of value. You had to act on your own judgment; you had to have the capacity to judge; the courage to stand on the verdict of your mind, and the purest, the most ruthless consecration to the goal."

I with ice Millions of men, an entire nation were not able to deter you from producing Rearden Metal—because you had the knowledge of its superlative value and the power which such knowledge gives. But what I wonder about Mr Rearden is why you live by one code of principles when you deal with nature and by another when you deal with men?

Rearden's eyes were fixed on him so intently that the question came slowly, as if the effort to pronounce it were a distraction. "What do you mean?"

Why?

life as clearly and

What is your work and your steel are serving? What do you wish to achieve by giving your life to the making of steel? By what standard of value do you judge your days? For instance why did you spend ten years of exacting effort to produce Rearden Metal?

### Random

de

th

And you that I understand it but you don't—would you throw me out of here?"

"I should have thrown you out of here anyway—so go ahead tell me what you mean."

"Are you proud of the rail of the John Galt Line?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because it's the best rail ever made."



"Why did you make it?"

"In order to make money."

"There were many easier ways to make money. Why did you choose the hardest?"

"You said it in your speech at Taggart's wedding in order to change my best effort for the best effort of others."

"If that was your purpose, have you achieved it?"

A beat of time vanished in a heavy drop of silence. "No," said Rearden.

"Have you made any money?"

"No."

"When you started out, you had a plan. A plan to make money."

warded for it?"

"Yes," said Rearden, his voice low.

"Then if you were punished, instead—what sort of code have you accepted?"

Rearden did not answer.

"It is a code."

It is a code, who needs a code? Rearden asked.

When you felt proud of the rail of the John Galt Line said Francisco the measured rhythm of his voice giving a ruthless clarity to his words "what sort of men did you think of? Did you want to see that Line used by your equals—by giants of productive energy, such as Ellis Wyatt, whom I know, and still live."

power of your mind but who would equal the men such as Eddie Willers—who could never invent your Metal, but who would do their best work as hard as you did live by their own effort, and—riding on your rail—give a moment's silent thanks to the man who gave them more than they could give him?

"Yes," said Rearden gently.

"Did they themselves work and their need as a part of your effort, who demand that you

: them who demand that it be the aim of your life to  
: them who demand that your strength be the voiceless right  
unpaid unrewarded slave of their impotence who proclaim  
you are born to serfdom by reason of your genius while they  
born to rule by the grace of incompetence that yours is  
to give but theirs only to take that yours is to produce but  
s to consume that you are not to be paid neither in matter nor  
put neither by wealth nor by recognition nor by respect nor by  
itude—so that they would ride on your rail and sneer at you  
curse you since they owe you nothing not even the effort of  
g off their hats whch you paid for? Would this be what you  
ited? Would you feel proud of it?

Id blast that rail first said Rearden his lips white  
Then why don't you do it, Mr Rearden? Of the three kinds of  
I described—which men are being destroyed and which are  
ig your Line today?"

They heard the d stant metal heartbeats of the mills through the  
g thread of silence

"What I described last said Francisco is any man who pro  
ims h s right to a single penny of another man's effort

Rearden d d not answer he was looking at the reflection of a  
n sign on dark windows in the distance

"You take pride in setting no limit to your endurance Mr Rear  
a because you th nk that you are doing right What if you aren't?  
at if you ~~are~~ placing your virtue in the service of evil and letting it  
come a tool for the destruction of everything you love respect and  
mire? Why don't you uphold your own code of values among men  
you do among iron smelters? You who won't allow one per cent  
impurity into an alloy of metal—what have you allowed into  
ur moral code?"

Rearden sat very still the words in his mind were like the beat of  
rps down the trail he had been seeking the words were the sanc  
n of the victim

"You who would not submit to the hardships of nature but set out  
conquer it and placed it in the service of your joy and your com  
rt—to what have you submitted at the hands of men? You who  
ow from your work that one bears punishment only for being  
rong—what have you been willing ~~to~~ bear and for what reason?  
If your life you have heard yourself denounced not for your  
ults, but for your greatest virtues You have been hated not for  
our mistakes but for your achievements You have been scorned  
or all those qualities of character which are your highest pride

a cruel for your unyielding integrity You  
nu-social for the vision that made you venture upon  
oads You ~~are~~ ~~the~~ ~~at~~ ~~length~~ and self d sc  
n called greedy  
h You who ve  
n called a P

site You, who've created abundance where there had been nothing but wastelands and helpless starving men before you have been called a robber You who've kept them all alive, have been called an exploiter You the purest and most moral man among them, have been sneered at as a 'vulgar materialist' Have you stopped to

to deal with nature but you thought that you needed no such law to deal with men You left the deadliest weapon in the hands of your enemies a weapon you never suspected or understood Their moral code is their weapon Ask yourself how deeply and in how

I'm the first man who has given you what the whole world owes you and what you should have demanded of all men before you dealt with them a moral sanction"

Rearden whirled to him, then remained still, with a stillness like a gasp Francisco leaned forward, as if he were reaching the landing of a dangerous flight and his eyes were steady, but their glance seemed to tremble with intensity

"You're guilty of a great sin, Mr Rearden much guiltier than they tell you but not in the way they preach. The worst guilt is to accept an undeserved guilt—and that is what you have been doing all your life You have been paying blackmail, not for your vices, but for your virtues You have been willing to carry the load of an unearned punishment—and to let it grow the heavier the greater the virtues you practiced. But your virtues were those which keep men alive. Your own moral code—the one you lived by, but never stated acknowledged or defended—was the code that preserves man's existence If you were punished for it, what was the nature of that

man's motive power? Man's motive power is his moral code As yourself where their code is leading You and what it offers you is your final goal A viler evil than to murder a man, is to tell him

Even still, you must support them because they cannot survive without you Consider the obscenity of offering their impotence as their need—their need of you—as a justification for your tortures

are you willing to accept it? Do you care to purchase—at the price of your great endurance, at the price of your agony—the satisfaction of the needs of your own destroyers?"

"No!"

"Mr. Rearden," said Francisco, his voice solemnly calm, "if you

at of his strength, and the greater his effort the heavier the weight  
are down upon his shoulders—what would you tell him to do?"

"I . . . don't know. What . . . could he do? What would you  
tell him?"

"To shrug."

The clatter of the metal came in a flow of irregular sounds with-  
out discernible rhythm, not like the action of a mechanism, but as  
if some conscious impulse were behind every sudden, tearing rise  
and fall.

the gaunt figure on the edge of the desk was erect, the cold  
blue eyes showed nothing but the intensity of a glance fixed upon a  
great distance, only the inflexible mouth betrayed a line drawn by  
pain.

"Go on," said Rearden with effort, "continue. You haven't finished,  
have you?"

"I have to . . . it is . . . very hard."

I want you to an-  
your burden, how

can you . . .  
The scream of an alarm siren shattered the space beyond the win-  
dow and shot like a rocket in a long, thin line to the sky. It held  
for an instant, then fell, then went on in rising falling spirals of  
sound as if it were . . .  
wa-  
of .

as an instant later, be-  
the blast of the same  
in the hall where the

door, Francisco was out, racing to meet the sound of the call for  
help. Rearden had thought himself a good runner but he could not  
keep up with the swift figure streaking off through stretches of red  
glare and darkness, the figure of a useless playboy he had hated  
himself for admiring.

The stream, gushing from a hole low on the side of a blast fur-

nace, did not have the red glow of fire, but the white radiance of sunlight. It poured along the ground, branching off in random sudden streaks, it cut through a dank fog of steam with a bright suggestion of morning. It was liquid iron, and what the scream of the alarm proclaimed was a break-out.

The charge of the furnace had been hung up and, breaking, had blown the tap hole open. The furnace foreman lay knocked unconscious, the white flow spurted, slowly tearing the hole wider, and men were struggling with sand, hose and fire clay to stop the glowing streaks that spread in a heavy, gliding motion, eating everything on their way into jets of acrid smoke.

In the few moments which Rearden needed to grasp the sight and nature of the disaster, he saw a man's figure rising suddenly at the foot of the furnace—a figure outlined by the red glare almost as if it stood in the path of the torrent, he saw the swing of a white short-sleeved arm that rose and flung a black object into the source of the spurning metal. It was Francisco d'Anconia, and his action belonged to an art which Rearden had not believed any man to be trained to perform any longer.

Years before, Rearden had worked in an obscure steel plant in Minnesota, where it had been his job, after a blast furnace was tapped, to close the hole by hand—by throwing bullets of fire clay

and methods of a distant past. Rearden had done the job, but all the years since, he had met no other man able to do it. In the midst of shooting jets of live steam in the face of a crumbling blast furnace, he was now seeing the tall, slim figure of the playboy performing the task with the skill of an expert.

It took an instant for Rearden to tear off his coat, seize a pair of goggles from the first man in sight and join Francisco at the mouth of the furnace. There was no time to speak, to feel or to wonder. Francisco glanced at him once—and what Rearden saw was a smudged face, black goggles and a wide grin.

They stood on a slippery bank of baked mud, at the edge of the white stream, with the raging hole under their feet, flinging clay into the glare where the twisting tongues that looked like gas were boiling metal. Rearden's consciousness became a progression of

body's precision, of its response to his will. And, with no time to know it, but knowing it, seizing it with his senses past the censorship of his mind, he was seeing a black silhouette with red rays shooting from behind its shoulders, its elbows, its angular curves—red rays circling through steam like the long needles of spot

lights, following the movements of a swift, expert, confident being  
bes under the

plain, but he  
was what he

refusal to submit to disaster, the irresistible drive to fight it, the tri-  
umphant feeling of his own ability to win. He was certain that

weath. Sparks hung about their feet and burst in sudden sheafs out  
of the metal, dying unnoticed against their clothes, against the skin  
of their hands. The stream was coming slower, in broken spurts  
through the dam rising beyond their sight

Young man with a look of chronic hurt and  
father, rushed up to him, crying, "I couldn't help it, Mr. Rearden

and launched into a speech of explanation Rearden turned his back on him without a word. It was the assistant in charge of the pressure gauge of the furnace, a young man out of college.

Somewhere on the outer edge of Rearden's consciousness there was the thought that accidents of this nature were happening more frequently now, caused by the kind of ore he was using, but he had to use whatever ore he could find. There was the thought that his old workers had always been able to avert disaster, any of them would have seen the indications of a hang up and known how to prevent it, but there were not many of them left, and he had to employ whatever men he could find. Through the swirling coils of steam around him he observed that it was the older men who had rushed from all over the mills to fight the break-out and now stood in line, being given first aid by the medical staff. He wondered what was happening to the young men of the country. But the wonder was swallowed by the sight of the college boy's face, which he could not bear to see, by a wave of contempt, by the wordless thought that this was the enemy, there was nothing to fear. All these things came to him and vanished in the outer darkness, the light blinding them out was Francisco d'Anconia.

He saw Francisco giving orders to the men around him. They did not know who he was or where he came from, but they listened, they knew he was a man who knew his job. Francisco broke off in the middle of a sentence, seeing Rearden approach and listen, and said, laughing, "Oh, I beg your pardon!" Rearden said, "Go right ahead, I'm all right."

Rearden felt that he had been talked together with Francisco. He felt that he had been wanted, and that he had been who had

learned a secret. Francisco's face once in a while.

After a while Francisco "you" was in the way he said it.

Rearden chuckled. "You saved my furnace."

They went on with their work.

glare of me denia

saw a face made lifeless by an odd dejection.

"Are you hurt?"

"No, do not at all."

"Come here," ordered Rearden, opening the door of his bathroom.

"Look in yourself."

"Never mind. You come here."

For the first time, Rearden felt that he was the older man, he felt

pleasure of taking Francisco in charge, he felt a confident, used, paternal protectiveness. He washed the grime off Francisco's face.

Francisco shrugged. "I was brought up around smelters of every kind," he answered indifferently.

Rearden could not decipher the expression of his face. It was only a look of peculiar stillness, as if his eyes were fixed on some secret of his own that drew his mouth into a line of desolate, bitter, self-mockery.

They did not speak until they were back in the office.

"You know," said Rearden, "everything you said here was true. That was only part of the story. The other part is what we've got tonight. Don't you see? We're able to act. They're not. So it's who'll win in the long run, no matter what they do to us."

Francisco did not answer.

"Listen," said Rearden, "I know what's been the trouble with you. You've never cared to do a real day's work in your life. I thought you were conceited enough, but I see that you have no idea of what you've got in you. Forget that fortune of yours for a while and come work for me. I'll start you as furnace foreman any time. You don't know what it will do for you. In a few years you'll be ready to appreciate and to run the Anconia Copper."

He expected a burst of laughter and he was prepared to argue, but instead, he saw Francisco shaking his head slowly as if he could not hear his voice as if he feared that were he to speak, he would accept. In a moment, he said, "Mr. Rearden, I think I would give the rest of my life for one year as your furnace foreman. But I can't."

"Why not?"

"Don't ask me. It's . . . a personal matter."

The vision of Francisco in Rearden's mind, which he had resented and found irresistibly attractive, had been the figure of a man radically incapable of suffering. What he saw now in Francisco's eyes was the look of a quiet, tightly controlled, patiently borne torture. Francisco reached silently for his overcoat.

"You're not leaving, are you?" asked Rearden.

"Yes."

"Aren't you going to finish what you had to tell me?"

"Not tonight."

"You wanted me to answer a question. What was it?"

How can I—what?  
I am the only man who  
can do it. I know it."



## Chapter IV THE SANCTION OF THE VICTIM

The roast turkey had cost \$30 The champagne had cost \$25 The lace tablecloth a cobweb of grapes and vine leaves iridescent in the candlelight sign but cost \$2.5 wreaths to think

A pea filled with into pumpkins that were cut as open mouthed faces drooling nuts and candy upon the tablecloth.

It was Thanksgiving dinner, and the three who faced Rearden about the table were his wife, his mother and his brother

"This is the night to thank the Lord for our blessings" said Rearden's mother "God has been kind to us There are people all over the country who haven't got any food in the house tonight, and some that haven't even got a house, and more of them going jobless every day Gives me the creeps to look around in the city Why, and

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what she's come to—just a toothless old hag wrapped in a mar overcoat, panhandling on a street corner And I thought I could've been me but for the grace of God"

"Well, if thanks are in order," said Lillian gaily, "I think that I shouldn't forget Gertrude the new cook. She's an artist."

"Me, I'm just going to be old fashioned," said Philip "I'm going to thank the sweetest mother in the world"

"Well for the matter of that," said Rearden's mother, "we ought to thank Lillian for this dinner and for all the trouble she took make it so pretty She spent hours fixing the table It's real quaint and different."

"It's the wooden shoe that does it," said Philip, bending his head sidewise to study it in a manner of critical appreciation "That's a real touch Anybody can have candles, silverware and junk. It doesn't take anything but money—but this shoe that took thought"

Rearden said nothing The candlelight moved over his motionless face as over a portrait the portrait bore an expression of impeccable courtesy

"You haven't touched your wine," said his mother, looking at him "What I think is you ought to drink a toast in gratitude to people of this country who have given you so much"

"Henry is not in the mood for it, Mother," said Lillian "I'm afraid Thanksgiving is a holiday only for those who have a clear conscience" She raised her wine glass, but stopped it halfway to lift and asked "You're not going to make some sort of stand your trial tomorrow, are you, Henry?"

"am."  
 He put the glass down "What are you going to do?"  
 "You'll see it tomorrow."  
 "You don't really imagine that you can get away with it?"  
 "I don't know what you have in mind as the object I'm to get  
 y with."  
 "Do you realize that the charge against you is extremely serious?"  
 "I do."  
 "You've admitted that you sold the Metal to Ken Danagger?"  
 "I have."  
 "They might send you to jail for ten years."  
 "I don't think they will, but it's possible."  
 "Have you been reading the newspapers, Henry?" asked Philip,  
 with an odd kind of smile.  
 "No."  
 "Oh, you should!"  
 "Should I? Why?"  
 "You ought to see the names they call you!"  
 "That's interesting," said Rearden, he said it about the fact that  
 Philip's smile was one of pleasure.  
 "I don't understand it," said his mother "Jail? Did you say jail,  
 Lillian? Henry, are you going to be sent to jail?"  
 "I might be."  
 "But that's ridiculous! Do something about it."  
 "What?"  
 "I don't know. I don't understand any of it. Respectable people  
 don't go to jail. Do something. You've always known what to do  
 about business."

"No," said a frightened,  
 Philip smiled coldly,  
 turning to Rearden. "Don't you think that your attitude is perfectly  
 silly?"  
 "No."  
 "You know that cases of this kind are not intended ever to

"Well, then I don't see how you can pretend that you're some  
 sort of victim. If you go to jail it will be your own fault."  
 "What pretense are you talking about, Lillian?"  
 "Oh, I know that you think you're fighting for some sort of

ple—but actually it's only a matter of your incredible conceit! You're doing it for no better reason than because you think you're right."

"Do you think they're right?"

She shrugged. "That's the conceit I'm talking about—the idea that it matters who's right or wrong. It's the most insufferable form of vanity, this insistence on always doing right. How do you know what's right? How can anyone ever know it? It's nothing but a delusion on to flatter your own ego and to hurt other people by flaunting your superiority over them."

He was looking at her with attentive interest. "Why should I hurt other people if it's nothing but a delusion?"

Is it necessary for me to point out that in *your* case it's not a delusion but hypocrisy? That is why I find your attitude preposterous. Questions of right have no bearing on human existence. And you're certainly nothing but human—aren't you, Henry? You're no better than any of the men you're going to face tomorrow. I think you should remember that it's not for you to make a stand on any sort of principle. Maybe you're a victim in this particular mess, maybe they're pulling a rotten trick on you, but what of it? They're doing it because they're weak, they couldn't resist the temptation to grab your Metal and to muscle in on your profits, because they had no other way of ever getting rich. Why should you blame them? It's only a question of different strains, but it's the same shoddy human fabric that gives way just as quickly. You wouldn't be tempted by money because it's so easy for you to make it. But you wouldn't withstand other pressures and you'd fall just as ignominiously. Wouldn't you? So you have no right to any righteous indignation against them. You have no moral superiority to assert or to defend. And if you haven't, then what is the point of fighting a battle that you can't win? I suppose that one might find some satisfaction in being a martyr if one is above reproach. But you—who are you to cast the first stone?

She paused to observe the effect. There was none except that look of attentive interest seemed intensified, he listened as if were held by some impersonal scientific curiosity. It was not the response she had expected.

"I believe you understand me," she said.

"No," he answered.

The day of humanity in a much deeper sense than you understand. Human beings are no longer expected to be saints nor to be punished for their sins. Nobody is right or wrong, we're all in it together, we're all human—and the human is the imperfect. You'll do nothing tomorrow by proving that they're wrong. You ought to live with good grace. You ought to appreciate the things that are ours for the taking.

That's the policy of our age—and it's time you accepted it. I

"If me you're too good for it. You know that you're not. You know at I know it."

The look of his eyes, held raptly still upon some point in space, as not in answer to her words; it was in answer to a man's voice saying to him, "Do you think that what you're facing is merely a conspiracy to seize your wealth? You, who know the source of wealth, should know it's much more and much worse than that."

He studied reminders of his guilt on every evening he had spent at home in the past three months. But guilt had been the one emotion he had found himself unable to feel. The punishment she had

verdict. She wanted to injure him by her contempt—but he could

not hurt her, his compassion. Her only power was the power of his own virtues. What if he chose to withdraw it?

An issue of guilt, he thought, had to rest on his own acceptance of the code—

concern for any verdict she chose to pass upon him he had lost respect for her judgment long ago. And the sole chain still holding him was only a last remnant of pity.

But what was the code on which she acted? What sort of code permitted the concept of a punishment that required the victim's own virtue as the fuel to make it work? A code—he thought—which would destroy only those who tried to observe it, a punishment, from which only the honest would suffer, while the dishonest would escape unhurt. Could one conceive of an infamy lower than to equate virtue with pain to make virtue, not vice the source and motive power of suffering? If he were the kind of rotter she was struggling to make him believe he was, then no issue of his honor and his moral worth would matter to him. If he wasn't, then what was the nature of her attempt?

To count upon his virtue and use it as an instrument of torture, to practice blackmail with the victim's generosity as sole means of

extortion to accept the gift of a man's good will and turn it into a tool for the giver's destruction . . . he sat very still contemplating the formula of so monstrous an evil that he was able to name it, but not to believe it possible.

He sat very still held by the hammering of a single question: Did Lillian know the exact nature of her scheme?—was it a conscious policy devised with full awareness of its meaning? He shuddered; he did not hate her enough to believe it.

He looked at her. She was absorbed, at the moment, in the task of

ing and rejecting for three months, that her vengeance was in the form of despair as he had supposed—the impression, which he regarded as inconceivable that she was enjoying it. He could find no trace of pain in her manner. She had an air of confidence now. To her she seemed to be at home in her house for the first time. Even though everything within the house was of her own choice and taste, she had always seemed to act as the bright, efficient, resentful manager of a high class hotel who keeps smiling in bitter amusement at her position of inferiority to the owners. The amusement remained, but the bitterness was gone. She had not gained weight, but her features had lost their delicate sharpness in a blurring softening look of satisfaction even her voice sounded as if it had grown plump.

He did not hear what she was saying she was laughing in the last flicker of the blue flames while he sat weighing the question: Did she know? He felt certain that he had discovered a secret much greater than the problem of his marriage, that he had grasped the formula of a policy practiced more widely throughout the world than he dared to contemplate at the moment. But to convict a human being of that practice was a verdict of irrevocable damnation and he knew that he would not believe it of anyone, so long as the possibility of a doubt remained.

No—he thought looking at Lillian, with the last effort of his generosity—he would not believe it of her. In the name of whatever grace and pride she possessed—in the name of such moments when he had seen a smile of joy on her face, the smile of a living being—in the name of the brief shadow of love he had once felt for her—he would not pronounce upon her a verdict of total evil.

The butler slipped a plate of plum pudding in front of him and he heard Lillian's voice. "Where have you been for the last five minutes, Henry—or is it for the last century? You haven't answered me. You haven't heard a word I said."

"I heard it," he answered quietly. "I don't know what you're trying to accomplish."

What a question!" said his mother. "Isn't that just like a man?"

"The men who're going to try you, know what  
re thinking. That's why they'll crack down on you, while they'd  
another man off."

"Why, no. I don't think they know what I'm thinking. That's what  
are to let them know tomorrow."

"Unless you show them that you're willing to give in and co-  
operate, you won't have a chance. You've been too hard to deal  
with."

"No. I've been too easy."

"But if they put you in jail," said his mother, "what's going to  
happen to your family? Have you thought of that?"

"No. I haven't."

"Have you?"

"No, I think you have a very provincial attitude, all of you," said  
Rearden suddenly. "Nobody here seems to be concerned with the  
wider, social aspects of the case. I don't agree with you Lillian. I  
can't see why you say that they're pulling some sort of rotten trick  
on Henry and that he's in the right. I think he's guilty as hell.  
Besides, I can explain the issue to you very simply. There's nothing  
unusual about it, the courts are full of cases of this kind. Business  
men are taking advantage of the national emergency in order to  
make money. They break the regulations which protect the common  
welfare of all—for the sake of their own personal gain. They're  
robbers of the black market who grow rich by defrauding the  
government of the money it needs."

Rearden sat looking at him, as if studying an object seen for the  
first time. Somewhere deep in Rearden's mind, as a steady, gentle,

inexorable beat was a man's voice, saying By what right—  
what code?—by what standard?

"Philip he said not raising his voice, "say any of that and you will find yourself out in the street, right now with the a you've got on your back with whatever change you've got in your pocket and with nothing else."

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"You  
street would you his mother said at last, it was not a  
but a plea

"I would "

"But he's your brother Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

No "

"Maybe he goes a bit too far at times, but it's just loose talk, it  
not that much " he's saying "

can you and  
way! I've never see  
him. You know that

he needs you "

"Does he know it?"

You can't be hard on a man who needs you, it will prey on your  
conscience for the rest of your life "

"It won't

"You've got to be kind, Henry "

"I'm not "

"You've got to have some pity "

"I haven't "

"A good man knows how to forgive "

"I don't "

"You wouldn't want me to think that you're selfish."

"I am "

Philip's eyes were darting from one to the other He looked like a  
man who had felt certain that he stood on solid granite and had sud-  
denly discovered that it was thin ice, now cracking open all around  
him

"But I " he tried and stopped his voice sounded like a splat  
testing the ice But don't I have any freedom of speech?

"In your own house Not in mine "

"Don't I have any right " "

"I

"I

"I

"I





... I would need enough money for a year or two ... to establish myself in a manner suitable to my—"

"You won't get it from me."

"I wasn't asking you for it, was I? Don't imagine that I couldn't get it somewhere else, if I wanted to! Don't imagine that I couldn't leave! I'd go in a minute, if I had only myself to think about. But Mother needs me, and if I deserted her—"

"Don't explain."

"And besides, you misunderstood me, Henry. I haven't said anything to insult you. I wasn't speaking in any personal way. I was only—"

as if they had witnessed nothing; they held no spark of excitement, no personal sensation, neither of defiance nor of regret, neither of shame nor of suffering; they were filmy ovals that held no response to reality, no attempt to understand it, to weigh it, to reach some verdict of justice—ovals that held nothing but a dull, still, unrelenting hatred. "Don't explain. Just keep your mouth shut."

The revulsion that made Rearden turn his face away contained a spasm of pity. There was an instant when he wanted to send his brother's children—

He noted, in a momentary pause, that the children remained silent. Through a brought him not. Where was their their code of justice—if justice had been any part of their code. Why didn't they throw at him all those accusations of cruelty and selfishness, which he had come to accept as the eternal chorus to his life? What had permitted them to do it for years? He knew that the words he heard in his mind were the key to the answer: The sanction of the victim.

"Don't let's quarrel," said his mother, her voice cheerless and vague. "It's Thanksgiving Day."

When he looked at Lillian, he caught a glance that made him certain she had watched him for a long time; its quality was passive.

He got up. "You will please excuse me now," he said to the table at large.

"Where are you going?"

He . . .

the r . . .

Sh . . .

"You can't go to New York . . .

it had the imperious belief . . .

when you can afford it . . .

'mean. You ought to th . . .

not in a position to permit yourself anything which you know to be lepravity."

By what code?—thought Rearden—by what standard?

"Why do you wish to go to New York tonight?"

"I think, Lillian, for the same reason that makes you wish to stop me."

"Tomorrow is your trial."

Thought of his family was replaced by the thought of his encounter with the Wet Nurse, the Washington boy of his mills.

At the time of his indictment, he had discovered that the boy had known about his deal with Danagger, yet had not reported it to anyone. "Why didn't you inform your friends about me?" he had asked.

The boy had answered brusquely, not looking at him, "Didn't want to."

"It was part of your job to watch precisely for things of that kind, wasn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Besides, your friends would have been delighted to hear it."

"I know."

"Didn't"

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and murder somebody fast before you let it get you—that reason that stopped you from turning informer—or else it will blast your career to hell.”

The boy had not answered.

This morning Rearden had gone to his office as usual even

“What are you doing here today?” Rearden had asked. “Don’t you know it’s a holiday?”

“Oh I let the girls off but I just came in to finish some business.”

“What business?”

“Oh letters and Oh hell I signed three letters and sharpened my pencils I know I didn’t have to do it today but I had nothing to do at home and I get lonesome away from the place.”

“Don’t you have any family?”

No not to speak of What about you Mr Rearden? Don’t you have any?

I guess—not to speak of.”

I like this place I like to hang around You know Mr Rearden what I studied to be was a metallurgist.”

Walking away Rearden had turned to glance back and had caught the Wet Nurse looking after him as a boy would look at the hero of his childhood’s favorite adventure story God help the poor little bastard—he had thought.

God help them all—he thought driving through the dark streets of a small town borrowing in contemptuous pity the words of their belief which he had never shared He saw newspapers displayed on metal stands with the black letters of headlines screaming to empty corners “Railroad Disaster” He had heard the news on the radio that afternoon there had been a wreck on the main line of Taggart Transcontinental near Rockland, Wyoming a split rail had sent a freight train crashing over the edge of a canyon. Wrecks on the Taggart main line were becoming more frequent—the track was wearing out—the track which less than eighteen months ago Dagny was planning to rebuild promising him a journey from coast to coast on his own Metal

She had spent a year picking worn rail from abandoned branches to patch the rail of the main line She had spent months fighting the men of Jim’s Board of Directors who said that the national emergency was only temporary and a track that had lasted for ten years could well last for another winter until spring when conditions would improve as Mr Wesley Mouch had promised Three weeks ago she had made them authorize the purchase of sixty thousand tons of new rail it could do no more than make a few patches across the continent in the worst divisions but it was all she had been able to obtain from them She had had to wrench the money out of men deaf with panic the freight revenues were falling at such

Rearden looked away from the headlines to the glow at the edge of the sky, which was the city of New York far ahead, his hands tightened on the wheel a little.

It was half past nine when he reached the city. Dagny's apartment was dark, when he let himself in with his key. He picked up the telephone and called her office. Her own voice answered: "Taggart transcontinental."

"Don't you know it's a holiday?" he asked.

"Hello, Hank. Railroads have no holidays. Where are you calling from?"

"Your place."

"I'll be through in another half-hour."

"It's all right. Stay there. I'll come for you."

The anteroom of her office was dark, when he entered, except for the lighted glass cubbyhole of Eddie Willers. Eddie was closing his desk, getting ready to leave. He looked at Rearden, in puzzled astonishment.

"Good evening, Eddie. What is it that keeps you people so busy—the Rockland wreck?"

Eddie sighed. "Yes, Mr. Rearden."

"That's what I want to see Dagny about—about your rail."

"She's still here."

He started toward her door, when Eddie called after him hesitantly, "Mr. Rearden . . ."

He stopped. "Yes?"

"I wanted to say . . . because tomorrow is your trial . . . and whatever they do to you is supposed to be in the name of all the people . . . I just wanted to say that . . . that it won't be in my name . . . even if there's nothing I can do about it, except to tell you . . . even if I know that that doesn't mean anything."

"It means much more than you suspect. Perhaps more than any of us suspect. Thanks, Eddie."

Dagny glanced up from her desk, when Rearden entered her office; he saw her watching him as he approached and he saw the look of weariness disappearing from her eyes. He sat down on the edge of the desk. She leaned back, brushing a strand of hair off her face, her shoulders relaxing under her thin white blouse.

"Dagny, there's something I want to tell you about the rail that you ordered. I want you to know this tonight."

She was watching him attentively; the expression of her face pulled hers into the same look of curious solemnity.

"I am supposed to deliver to Taggart Transcontinental, on February fifteenth, sixty thousand tons of rail—sixty thousand tons of steel—sixty thousand tons of rail. You will receive—sixty thousand tons of rail. You know what material is cheaper—steel. Your rail will not be steel, it will be Pea-sen."

object or agree I am not asking for your consent You are not supposed to consent or to know anything about it. I am doing this and I alone will be responsible We will work it so that those on your staff who'll know that you've ordered steel, won't know that

body, except on me They might suspect that I bribed someone on your staff, or they might suspect that you were in on it, but they won't be able to prove it I want you to give me your word that you will never admit it, no matter what happens It's my Metal, and if there are any chances to take, it's I who'll take them I have been planning this from the day I received your order I have ordered the copper for it, from a source which will not betray me I did not intend to tell you about it till later, but I changed my mind I want you to know it tonight—because I am going on trial tomorrow for the same kind of crime"

She had listened without moving At his last sentence, he saw a faint contraction of her cheeks and lips, it was not quite a smile, but it gave him her whole answer pain, admiration, understanding.

Then he saw her eyes becoming softer, more painfully, dangerously alive—he took her wrist, as if the tight grasp of his fingers and the severity of his glance were to give her the support she needed—and he said sternly "Don't thank me—this is not a favor—I am doing it in order to be able to bear my work, or else I'll break like Ken Danagger"

She whispered "All right Hank, I won't thank you" the tone of her voice and the look of her eyes making it a lie by the time it was uttered

He smiled, "Give me the word I asked"

She inclined her head "I give you my word" He released her

all. We  
appen to

a bar on

"Do you think you could steal a drink for me, if he doesn't have it locked?"

"I'll try"

He stood looking at the portrait of Nat Taggart on the wall of her office—the portrait of a young man with a lifted head—until she returned, bringing a bottle of brandy and two glasses He filled the

in silence

"You know, Dagny, Thanksgiving was a holiday established by productive people to celebrate the success of their work."

The movement of his arm, as he raised his glass, went from the portrait—to her—to himself—to the buildings of the city beyond the window.

For a month in advance, the people who filled the courtroom had been told by the press that they would see the man who was a greedy enemy of society, but they had come to see the man who had invented Rearden Metal.

He stood up, when the judges called upon him to do so. He wore a

round him.

The crowd knew from the newspapers that he represented the evil of ruthless wealth, and—as they praised the virtue of chastity, they ran to see any movie that displayed a half-naked female on its posters—so they came to see him, evil, at least, did not have the tale hopelessness of a bromide which none believed and none dared to challenge. They looked at him without admiration—admiration was a feeling they had lost the capacity to experience, long ago, they looked with curiosity and with a dim sense of defiance against those who had told them that it was their duty to hate him.

A few years ago, they would have jeered at his air of self-confident wealth. But today, there was a slate gray sky in the windows of the courtroom, which promised the first snowstorm of a long, hard winter; the last of the country's oil was vanishing and the coal mines were not able to keep up with the hysterical scramble for winter supplies. The crowd in the courtroom remembered that this was the case which had cost them the services of Ken Danagger. There were rumors that the output of the Danagger Coal Company had fallen perceptibly within one month; the newspapers said that it was merely a matter of readjustment while Danagger's cousin was reorganizing the company he had taken over. Last week, the front pages had carried the story of a catastrophe at the site of a housing project under construction: defective steel girders had collapsed, killing four workmen; the newspapers had not mentioned, but the crowd knew, that the girders had come from Owen Boyle's Associated Steel.

They sat in the courtroom in heavy silence and they looked at

The newspapers had snarled that the cause of the country's troubles, as this case demonstrated, was the selfish greed of rich industrialists, that it was men like Hank Rearden who were to blame.

for the shrinking diet the falling temperature and the cracking roof  
in the homes of the nation that if it had not been for men who  
- Hank  
his la  
"prof

The crowd remembered that these same newspapers less than  
two years ago had screamed that the production of Rearden Metal  
should be forbidden because its producer was endangering people's  
lives for the sake of his greed they remembered that the man in  
gray had ridden in the cab of the first engine to run over a ton  
of his own Metal and that he was now on trial for the greedy crime  
of withholding from the public a load of the Metal which it had  
been his greedy crime to offer in the public market.

According to the procedure established by directives cases of this  
kind were not tried by a jury but by a panel of three judges ap-  
pointed by the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Re-  
sources the procedure the directives had stated was to be informal  
and democratic The judge's bench had been removed from the old  
Philadelphia courtroom for this occasion, and replaced by a table  
on a wooden platform it gave the room an atmosphere suggestive  
of the kind of meeting where a presiding body puts something over  
a mentally retarded membership

One of the judges acting as prosecutor, had read the charge  
"You may now offer whatever plea you wish to make in your own  
defense" he announced

Facing the platform his voice inflectionless and peculiarly clear  
Hank Rearden answered

I have no defense

"Do you—" The judge stumbled he had not expected it to  
be that easy Do you throw yourself upon the mercy of this court?"

"I do not recognize this court's right to try me"

"What?"

"I do not — — — — —"

try it

"But you have admitted that you have broken our regulations  
controlling the sale of your Metal"

I do not recognize your right to control the sale of my Metal

"Is it necessary for me to point out that your recognition was  
required?"

"No I am fully aware of it and I am acting accordingly"

He noted the stillness of the room By the rules of the complex  
pretense which all those people played for one another's benefit  
they should have considered his stand as incomprehensible for  
there should have been rustles of astonishment and derision there  
were none they sat still they understood

"Do you mean that you are refusing to obey the law?" asked  
judge

No I am complying with the law—to the letter Your law holds my life, my work and my property may be disposed of without consent. Very well, you may now dispose of me without my participation in the matter I will not play the part of defending self, where no defense is possible, and I will not simulate the

you are to  
case and to

a prisoner brought to trial can defend himself only if there is an active principle of justice recognized by his judges, a principle holding his rights, which they may not violate and which he can like The law, by which you are trying me holds that there are principles, that I have no rights and that you may do with me whatever you please Very well Do it."

d by a code of moral values and that no man had the right to take his good through the violation of the rights of another If it is now believed that my fellow men may sacrifice me in any manner I please for the sake of whatever they deem to be their own good, if they believe that they may seize my property simply because they need it—well, so does any burglar There is only this difference the burglar does not ask me to sanction his act"

of his words would determine the course of her life Eddie Larkin sat beside her James Taggart had not come Paul Larkin sat hunched forward, his face thrust out, pointed like an animal's snout, sharpened by a look of fear now turning into malicious red Mr Mowen, who sat beside him was a man of greater intelligence and smaller understanding, his fear was of a simpler nature, and he whispered to Larkin,

What . . . what do you mean?"  
I hold that there is no clash of interests among men who do not  
vary to  
time it



"Any other method of curtailing profits is the method of looting—and I recognize it as such."

"Mr. Rearden, this is hardly the way to defend yourself."

"I said that I would not defend myself."

"But this is unheard of! Do you realize the gravity of the charge against you?"

"I do not care to consider it."

"Do you realize the possible consequences of your stand?"

"Fully."

"It is the opinion of this court that the facts presented by the prosecution seem to warrant no leniency. The penalty which this court has the power to impose on you is extremely severe."

"Go ahead."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Impose it."

The three judges looked at one another. Then their spokesman turned back to Rearden. "This is unprecedented," he said.

"It is completely irregular," said the second judge. "The law requires you to submit a plea in your own defense. Your only alternative is to state for the record that you throw yourself upon the mercy of the court."

"I do not."

"But you have to."

"Do you mean that what you expect from me is some sort of voluntary action?"

"Yes."

"I volunteer nothing."

"But the law demands that the defendant's side be represented on the record."

"Do you mean that you need my help to make this procedure legal?"

"Well, no, yes, that is, to complete the form."

"I will not help you."

The third and youngest judge, who had acted as prosecutor, snapped impatiently. "This is ridiculous and unfair! Do you want to let it look as if a man of your prominence had been railroaded without a—?" He cut himself off short. Somebody at the back of the courtroom emitted a long whistle.

"I want," said Rearden gravely, "to let the nature of this procedure appear exactly for what it is. If you need my help to disguise it—I will not help you."

"But we are giving you a chance to defend yourself—and it is you who are rejecting it."

"I will not help you to pretend that I have a chance. I will not help you to preserve an appearance of righteousness where rights are not recognized. I will not help you to preserve an appearance of rationality by entering a debate in which a gun is the final argument. I will not help you to pretend that you are administering justice."

"But the law compels you to volunteer a defense!"

There was laughter at the back of the courtroom  
"That is the flaw in your theory, gentlemen," said Rearden gravely, "and I will not help you out of it. If you choose to deal with men by means of compulsion, do so. But you will discover that you need the voluntary co-operation of your victims, in many more ways than you can see at present. And your victims should discover that it is their own volition—which you cannot force—that makes you possible. I choose to be consistent and I will obey you in the manner you demand. Whatever you wish me to do, I will do it at the point of a gun. If you sentence me to jail, you will have to send armed men to carry me there—I will not volunteer to move. If you fine me, you will have to seize my property to collect the fine—I will not volunteer to pay it. If you believe that you have the right to force me—use your guns openly. I will not help you to disguise the nature of your action."

The eldest judge leaned forward across the table and his voice became snavely derisive. "You speak as if you were fighting for some sort of principle, Mr. Rearden, but what you're actually fighting for is only your property, isn't it?"

"Yes, of course. I am fighting for my property. Do you know the kind of principle that represents?"

"You pose as a champion of freedom, but it's only the freedom to make money that you're after."

"Yes, of course. All I want is the freedom to make money. Do you know what that is?"

his own profit."

"I work for my own profit."

"No. I do not want my attitude to be misunderstood. I shall be glad to state it for the record. I am in full agreement with the facts of everything said about me in the newspapers—with the facts, but not with the evaluation. I work for nothing but my own profit—which I make by selling a product they need to men who are willing and able to buy it. I do not produce it for their benefit at the expense of mine, and they do not buy it for my benefit at the expense of theirs. I do not sacrifice my interests to them nor do they sacrifice theirs to me, we deal as equals by mutual consent to mutual advantage—and I am proud of every penny that I have earned in this manner. I am rich and I am proud of every penny I own. I made my money by my own effort, in free exchange and through the voluntary consent of every man I dealt with—the voluntary consent of those who employed me when I started, the voluntary consent of those who work for me now, the voluntary consent of those who buy my product. I shall answer all the questions you are afraid to ask me openly. Do I wish to pay my workers more than their

services are worth to me? I do not. Do I wish to sell my product for less than my customers are willing to pay me? I do not. Do I wish to sell it at a loss or give it away? I do not. If (this is evil, do whatever you please about me, according to whatever standards you hold. These are mine. I am earning my own living, as every honest man must. I refuse to accept as guilt the fact of my own existence and the fact that I must work in order to support it. I refuse to accept as guilt the fact that I am able to do it and do it well. I refuse to accept as guilt the fact that I am able to do it better than most people—the fact that my work is of greater value than the work of my neighbors and that more men are willing to pay me. I refuse to apologize for my ability—I refuse to apologize for my success—I refuse to apologize for my money. If this is evil, make the most of it. If this is what the public finds harmful to its interests, let the public destroy me. This is my code—and I will accept no other. I could say to you that I have done more good for my fellow men than you can ever hope to accomplish—but I will

will not say that the good of others was the purpose of my work—my own good was my purpose, and I despise the man who surrenders his I could say to you that you do not serve the public good—that you

devastation—as any looter must, when he runs out of your land. I could say it but I won't. It is not your particular policy that I challenge, but your moral premise. If it were true that men could achieve their good by means of turning some men into sacrificial animals, and I were asked to immolate myself for the sake of creatures who wanted to survive at the price of my blood, if I were asked to serve the interests of society apart from, above and against my own—I would refuse. I would reject it as the most contemptible evil, I would fight it with every power I possess. I would fight it

say. The public good be damned, I will have no part of it.

his judges. He says that pleaded for

the open, he says a th  
an am  
round  
our

in newswreck theaters at any appearance of a businessman on the

reen they did not attempt a counter-demonstration, they were  
lent.

As he looked at the crowd, people saw in his face what the threats  
the judges had not been able to evoke the first sign of emotion.  
It was a few moments before they heard the furious beating of a  
ivel upon the table and one of the judges yelling  
"— or I shall have the courtroom cleared!"

arkin was staring at the floor. There was no expression on Bertram  
sudder's face—or on Lilian's. She sat at the end of a row, her legs  
crossed.

up to see, had looked for from the start of the session, had  
anted to be present more than any other face around him. But Fran  
sco d'Anconia had not come.

"Mr Rearden," said the eldest judge, smiling affably reproach  
ally and spread out his hands.

anguished achievements. Our purpose is only to balance social  
resources and do justice to all. This hearing is really intended, not as  
trial but as a friendly discussion aimed at mutual understanding  
and co-operation."

"I do not co-operate at the point of a gun."

"Why not?"  
ant such  
ies chief  
nent of

essed his guilt by disappearing in order to escape trial."

"No. We did not reach an agreement."

of  
b  
u may not share some  
we're all working for

We realize that you  
were prompted to disregard legal technicalities by the critical situ-  
ation of the coal mines and the crucial importance of fuel to the  
public welfare."

"No. I was prompted by my own profit and my own interests.  
What effect it had on the coal mines and the public welfare is for  
you to estimate. That was not my motive."

Mr Mowen stared dazedly about him.

Larkin "Something's gone screwy here"

"Oh shut up!" snapped Larkin

"I am sure Mr Rearden," said the eldest judge "that you do not really believe—nor does the public—that we wish to treat you as a sacrificial victim. If anyone has been laboring under such a misapprehension we are anxious to prove that it is not true."

The judges retired to consider their verdict. They did not stay long. They returned to an ominously silent courtroom—and announced that a fine of \$5 000 was imposed on Henry Rearden, but that the sentence was suspended.

Streaks of jeering laughter ran through the applause that swept the courtroom. The applause was aimed at Rearden—the laughter—at the judges.

Rearden stood motionless, not turning to the crowd, barely hearing the applause. He stood looking at the judges. There was no triumph in his face.

A vision with  
the enormity

of the world. He felt as if, after a journey of years through a landscape of devastation past the ruins of great factories, the wrecks of powerful engines, the bodies of invincible men, he had come upon the despoiler, expecting to find a giant—and had found a rat eager to scurry for cover at the first sound of a human step. If this is what has beaten us, he thought, the guilt is ours.

He was jolted back into the courtroom by the people pressing to surround him. He smiled in answer to their smiles, to the frantic, tragic eagerness of their faces. There was a touch of sadness in his smile.

"God bless you, Mr Rearden!" said an old woman with a ragged shawl over her head. "Can't you save us, Mr Rearden? They're eating us alive, and it's no use fooling anybody about how it's the rich that they're after—do you know what's happening to us?"

"Listen, Mr Rearden," said a man who looked like a factory worker. "It's the rich who're selling us down the river. Tell those wealthy bastards, who're so anxious to give everything away, that when they give away their palaces, they're giving away the skin off our backs."

"I know it," said Rearden.

The guilt is ours, he thought. If we who were the movers and shakers...

...day they had cheered him by the side of the track of the John Galt Line. But tomorrow they would clamor for a new directive from Wesley Mouch and a free housing project from Orren Boyle, while Boyle's girders collapsed upon their heads. They would do it, because they would be told to forget as a sin that which had made them cheer Hank Rearden.

Why were they ready to renounce their highest moments as a people? Why were they willing to betray the best within them? What

them believe that this earth was a realm of evil where despair

what idea, what simple idea available to the simplest man, had  
mankind accept the doctrines that led it to self-destruction

Frank, I'll never think that it's hopeless not ever again said  
by that evening after the trial I'll never be tempted to quit  
I've proved that the right always works and always wins—"She  
said, then added "—provided one knows what is the right.  
Alan said to him the next day So you've won have you?"

the thing that makes you sure is a moral premise  
the newspapers were silent After the exaggerated attention they  
given to the case they acted as if the trial were not worthy of  
it They printed brief accounts on unlikely pages worded in such  
evasives that no reader could discover any hint of a controversial  
issue

The businessmen he met seemed to wish to evade the subject of  
the trial Some made no comment at all but turned away their  
heads showing a peculiar resentment under the effort to appear non-  
committal as if they feared that the mere act of looking at him  
would be interpreted as taking a stand Others ventured to com-  
ment "In my opinion, Rearden it was extremely unwise of you  
It seems to me that this is hardly the time to make enemies

We can't afford to arouse resentment

"Whose resentment?" he asked

"I don't think the government will like it.

"You saw the consequences of that

"Well I don't know The public won't take it, there's bound  
to be a lot of indignation"

"You saw how the public took it"

"Well I don't know. You had not to give any  
ground—and you've

— you have no right  
to your profits and your property?"

"Oh no no certainly not—but why go to extremes? There's  
always a middle ground"

"A middle ground between you and your murderers?"

"Now why use such words?"

"What I said at the trial was it true or not?"

"It's going to be misquoted and misunderstood"

"Was it true or not?"

"The public is too dumb to grapple with such issues"

"Was it true or not?"

"It's no time to boast about being rich—when the populace is starving. It's just goading them on to seize everything."

"But telling them that you have no right in your wealth, while they have—is what's going to restrain them?"

Well, I don't know

"I don't like the things you said at your trial," said another man.

save your goddamn necks along with mine"

A group of businessmen headed by Mr. Mowen did not issue any statements about the trial. But a week later they announced, with an inordinate amount of publicity, that they were endowing the

the fact that of all social groups he seems to be most unpopular with his own fellow businessmen. His old-fashioned brand of ruthlessness seems to be too much even for those predatory barons of profit.

On an evening in December—when the street beyond his window was like a congested throat coughing with the horns of pre-Christmas traffic—Rearden sat in his room at the Wayne-Falkland Hotel fighting an enemy more dangerous than weariness or fear: revulsion against the thought of having to deal with human beings.

He sat unwilling to venture into the streets of the city, unwilling to move, as if he were chained to his chair and to this room. He had tried for hours to ignore an emotion that felt like the pull of homesickness: his awareness that the only man whom he longed to see was here, in this hotel just a few floors above him.

He had caught himself, in the past few weeks, wasting time in the lobby whenever he entered the hotel or left it, loitering unnecessarily at the mail counter or the newsstand watching the hurried currents of people, hoping to see Francisco d'Anconia among them. He had caught himself eating solitary dinners in the restaurant of the Wayne-Falkland, with his eyes on the curtains of the entrance doorway. Now he caught himself sitting in his room, thinking that the distance was only a few floors.

He rose to his feet, with a chuckle of amused indignation. He was acting, he thought, like a woman who waits for a telephone call.





"Do you mean, my trial?"

"I mean, your trial."

"How do you know? You weren't there."

Francisco smiled, because the tone of the voice confessed an added sentence. I was looking for you. "Don't you suppose I heard every word of it on the radio?"

"You did? Well, how did you like hearing your own lines come over the air, with me as your stooge?"

"You weren't, Mr. Rearden. They weren't my lines. Weren't they the things you had always lived by?"

"Yes."

"I only helped you to see that you should have been proud to live by them."

"I am glad you heard it."

"It was great, Mr. Rearden—and about three generations too late."

"What do you mean?"

"If one single businessman had had the courage, then, to say that he worked for nothing but his own profit—and to say it proudly—he would have saved the world."

"I haven't given up the world as lost."

"It isn't. It can never be. But oh God!—what he would have spared us!"

"Well, I guess we have to fight, no matter what era we're caught in."

"V. . . . ."

"See for yourself."

"I know that you had a great deal to tell me, when we were interrupted, that night at the mills. Why don't you finish what you had to say?"

"No. It's too soon."

Francisco acted as if there were nothing unusual about this visit, as if he took it as a matter of natural course—as he had always acted in Rearden's presence. But Rearden noted that he was not so calm as he wished to appear, he was pacing the room, in a manner that seemed a release for an emotion he did not want to confess, he had forgotten the lamp and it still stood on the floor as the room's sole illumination.

"You've been taking an awful beating in the way of discoveries, haven't you?" said Francisco. "How did you like the behavior of your fellow businessmen?"

"I suppose it was to be expected."

"It's . . . . ."  
"The . . . . ."  
"nd of . . . . ."

was an instant's pause, but Francisco answered calmly.

"Since I understood what those men were doing. He added "I know what you're going through right now and what's still ahead."

"Thanks," said Rearden.

"For what?"

"For what you're trying so hard not to show. But don't worry about me. I'm still able to stand it. You know, I didn't come here because I wanted to talk about myself or even about the trial."

"I'll agree to any subject you choose—in order to have you here." He said it in the tone of a courteous joke, but the tone could not disguise it: he meant it. "What did you want to talk about?"

"You."

Francisco stopped. He looked at Rearden for a moment, then answered quietly "All right."

If that which Rearden felt could have gone directly into words past the barrier of his will, he would have cried: "Don't let me down—I need you—I am fighting all of them. I have fought to my limit and am condemned to fight beyond it—and, as sole ammunition possible in me, I need the knowledge of one single man whom I can trust, respect and admire."

Instead, he said calmly, very simply—and the only note of a personal bond between them was that tone of sincerity which comes with a direct, unqualifiedly rational statement and implies the same honesty of mind in the listener—"You know, I think that the only real moral crime that one man can commit against another is the attempt to create, by his words or actions, an impression of the contradictory, the impossible, the irrational, and thus shake the concept of rationality in his victim."

"That's true."

"If I say that that is the dilemma you've put me in, would you help me by answering a personal question?"

"I will try."

"I don't have to tell you—I think you know it—that you are the man of the highest mind I have ever met. I am coming to accept not as right, but at least as possible, the fact that you refuse to exercise your great ability in the world of today. But what a man does out of despair is not necessarily a key to his character. I have always thought that the real key is in that which he seeks for his enjoyment. And this is what I find inconceivable: no matter what you've given up, so long as you chose to remain alive, how can you find any pleasure in spending a life as valuable as yours on running after cheap women and on an imbecile's idea of diversions?"

Francisco looked at him with a fine smile of amusement as if saying: "No? You didn't want to talk about yourself? And what is it that you're confessing but the desperate loneliness which makes the question of my character more important to you than any other question right now?"

The smile merged into a soft, good-natured red chuckle as if the question involved no problem for him, no painful secret to reveal.

"There's a way to solve every dilemma of that kind, Mr. Rearden. Check your premises." He sat down on the floor, sitting gaily informally, for a conversation he would enjoy. "Is it

first hand conclusion that I am a man of high mind?"

"Yes."

"Do you know of your own first hand knowledge that I spend my life running after women?"

"You've never denied it."

"Denied it? I've gone through a lot of trouble to create that impression."

"Do you mean to say that it isn't true?"

"Do I strike you as a man with a miserable inferiority complex?"

"Good God, no!"

"Only that kind of man spends his life running after women."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that a man who is so sure of himself that he doesn't need the men-

adventures—which can't be done, because sex is not the cause, but an effect and a consequence of a man's own value."

"I don't see how a man can be so sure of himself that he doesn't need the adventures which can't be done, because sex is not the cause, but an effect and a consequence of a man's own value."

"The body creates a desire and makes a choice for you—just about like a railroad rails choose the wheels."

"I don't see how a man can be so sure of himself that he doesn't need the adventures which can't be done, because sex is not the cause, but an effect and a consequence of a man's own value."

"I don't see how a man can be so sure of himself that he doesn't need the adventures which can't be done, because sex is not the cause, but an effect and a consequence of a man's own value."

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because he can feel nothing for the woman he respects, but himself in bondage to an irresistible passion for a slut from the  
The other kind

esteem, since he scoffs at such a concept as moral values, yet he feels the profound self-contempt which comes from believing that he is a piece of meat. He will not acknowledge, but he knows that sex is the physical expression of a tribute to personal values. So he tries, by going through the motions of the effect, to acquire that which should have been the cause. He tries to gain a sense of his own value from the women who surrender to him—and he forgets that the women he picks have neither character nor judgment nor standard of value. He tells himself that all he's after is physical pleasure—but observe that he tires of his women in a week or a

that is your woman-chaser. Does the description fit me?"

"God, no!"

"Then you can judge, without asking my word for it, how much chasing of women I've done in my life."

"But what on earth have you been doing on the front pages of newspapers for the last— isn't it twelve—years?"

"I've spent a lot of money on the most ostentatiously vulgar parties I could think of, and a miserable amount of time on being seen with the appropriate sort of women. As for the rest—" He stopped, then said, "I have some friends who know this, but you are the first person to whom I am confiding it against my own rules. I have never slept with any of those women. I have never touched one of them."

were eager to rush into print with stories insinuating that being seen with me at a restaurant was the sign of a great romance. What do you suppose those women are after but the same thing—the chaser—the desire to gain their own value from the number and of the men they conquer? Only it's one step phonier, because

desire. They wanted food for their vanity—and I gave it to them. I gave them the chance to boast to their friends and to see themselves in the scandal sheets in the roles of great seductresses. But do you know that it works in exactly the same way as what you did in your trial? If you want to defeat any kind of vicious fraud—comply with it literally, adding nothing of your own to disguise its nature. Those women understood. They saw whether there's any satisfaction in being envied by others for a feat one has not achieved. Instead of self-esteem, their publicized romances with me have given them a deeper sense of inferiority. Each one of them knows that she's tried and failed. If dragging me into bed is supposed to be her public standard of value, she knows that she couldn't live up to it. I think those women hate me more than any other man on earth. But my secret is safe—because each one of them thinks that she was the only one who failed, while all the others succeeded, so she'll be

others consider that which I really am as evil. Let them have what they prefer—what I appear to be on the front pages."

"But what for? Why did you do it? Just to teach them a lesson?"

"Hell, no! I wanted to be known as a playboy."

"Why?"

"A playboy is a man who just can't help letting money run through his fingers."

"Why did you want to assume such an ugly sort of role?"

"Camouflage."

"For what?"

"For a purpose of my own."

"What purpose?"

Francisco shook his head. "Don't ask me to tell you that I've told you more than I should. You'll come to know the rest of it soon, anyway."

"If it's more than you should, why did you tell me?"

"Because . . . you've made me become impatient for the first time in years." The note of a suppressed emotion came back into his voice. "Because . . . the truth about me . . .

pla . . .  
I've . . .  
will . . .

"I've never confessed that to anyone . . . not even . . . he"

"Have you lost her?"

Francisco sat looking off into space; in a moment, he answered tonelessly, "I hope not."

The light of the lamp hit his face from below, and Rearden could not see his eyes, only his mouth drawn in lines of endurance and oddly solemn resignation. Rearden knew that this was a wound not to be probed any further.

With one of his swift changes of mood, Francisco said, "Oh well, it's just a little longer!" and rose to his feet, smiling.

"Since you trust me," said Rearden, "I want to tell you a secret of mine in exchange. I want you to know how much I trusted you before I came here. And I might need your help later."

"You're the only man left whom I'd like to help."

"There's a great deal that I don't understand about you, but I'm certain of one thing—that you're not a friend of the looters."

"I'm not." There was a hint of amusement in Francisco's face, as at an understatement.

they tried me for"

Sitting on the arm of a chair, a few feet away, Francisco leaned forward to look at him silently, frowning, for a long moment. "Do you think that you're fighting them by doing it?" he asked.

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being thrown in  
istence a system  
by the breaking

"It's not for their system, but for customers whom I can't abandon to the mercy of their system—I intend to outlast that system of theirs—I don't intend to let them stop me, no matter how hard they make it for me—and I don't intend to give up the world to them, even if I am the last man left. Right now, that illegal order is more important to me than the rest of the world."

man I can trust."

"Really? Who is it?"

"You."

phony name—but I'll need your help to prevent anyone on your

survive and ~~in~~ beat them. I've never asked for anyone's help. I'm

"Wait!"

It was a scream of plain shock Francisco had shot to his feet, at any attempt to hide anything. "On December fifth?"

"Yes," said Rearden, stupefied.

Francisco leaped to the telephone. "I told you not to deal with Anconia Copper!" It was the half-moaning, half-furious cry of despair.

His hand was reaching for the telephone, but jerked back. He wiped the edge of the table, as if to stop himself from lifting a receiver, and he stood, head down, for how long a time neither he nor Rearden could tell. Rearden was held numb by the fact of watching an agonized struggle with the motionless figure of a man, its only evidence. He could not guess the nature of the struggle, he knew only that there was something which Francisco had the power to prevent in that moment and that it was a power which

face drawn by so  
ble cry of pain,  
mness, as if the  
it.

Francisco . . . what's the matter?"

"Hank, I . . ." He shook his head, stopped, then stood up straight. "Mr. Rearden," he said, in a voice that had the strength, the despair and the peculiar dignity of a plea he knew to be hopeless. "For the time when you're going to damn me, when you're going to doubt every word I said . . . I swear to you—by the woman I love—that I am your friend."

The memory of Francisco's face as it looked in that moment, came back to Rearden.



## Chapter V ACCOUNT OVERDRAWN

It was the first failure in the history of Rearden Steel. For the first time, an order was not delivered as promised. But by February 15, when the Taggart rail was due, it made no difference to anyone any longer.

Winter had come early, in the last days of November. People said that it was the hardest winter on record and that no one could be blamed for the unusual severity of the snowstorms. They did not care to remember that there had been a time when snowstorms did not sweep unresisted, down unlighted roads and upon the roofs of unheated houses, did not stop the movement of trains, did not leave a wake of corpses counted by the hundreds.

The first time that Danagger Coal was late in delivering fuel to Taggart Transcontinental in the last week of December, Dan-

said, because they were exhausted by the harsh discipline of the former management, he could not help it if some of the superintendents and foremen had quit him without reason, men who had been with the company for ten to twenty years, he could not help it if there seemed to be some friction between his workers and his

It was only one day's delay. It caused a three days' delay in the run of Freight Train Number 386, bound from California to New York with fifty nine carloads of lettuce and oranges. Freight Train Number 386 waited on sidings, at coaling stations, for the fuel that had not arrived. When the train reached New York, the lettuce and oranges had to be dumped into the East River. They had waited their turn too long in the freight houses of California with the train schedules cut and the engines forbidden, by directive, to pull a train of more than sixty cars. Nobody but their friends and trade associates noticed that three orange growers in California went out of business, as well as two lettuce farmers in Imperial Valley, nobody noticed the closing of a commission house in New York, of a plumbing company to which the commission house owned money, of a lead pipe wholesaler who had supplied the plumbing company. When people were starving, said the newspapers, one did not have to feel concern over the failures of business enterprises which were only private ventures for private profit.

The coal shipped across the Atlantic by the Bureau of Globa-

ref did not reach the People's State of England it was seized by  
near Danneskjold

he second time that Danagger Coal was late in delivering fuel  
Taggart Transcontinental, in mid-January, Danagger's cousin  
tled over the telephone that he could not help it his mines had  
a shut down for three days, due to a shortage of lubricating oil  
the machinery The supply of coal to Taggart Transcontinental  
four days late

fr Quinn, of the Quinn Ball Bearing Company which had once  
ved from Connecticut to Colorado, waited a week for the freight  
e that carried his order of Rearden steel When the train ar-  
d, the doors of the Quinn Ball Bearing Company's plant were  
ed

Inhabited as a state . . . . .

celled and the purchasers of his homes sent wandering off down  
wswept roads in search of that which did not exist anywhere  
longer

he snowstorm that came at the end of January blocked the passes  
ugh the Rocky Mountains, raising white walls thirty feet high  
The man

s, they remained beyond the reach of help Trains could not  
reach them through the storm The last of the trucks made by  
vrence Hammond broke down on the frozen grades of the  
untain highways The best of the airplanes once made by Dwight  
ders were sent out, but never reached Winston Station, they

the mass of the storm, when the white mass vanished and  
and it the stillness of a black void merging a lightless earth with  
tarless sky—the passengers could see, many miles away to the  
th, a small tongue of flame twisting in the wind It was Wyatt's  
ch.

By the morning of the sixth day, when the trains were able to  
ve and proceeded down the slopes of Utah, of Nevada, of Cali-  
nia, the trainmen observed the smokeless stacks and the closed

doors of small trackside factories, which had not been closed on their last run

"Storms are an act of God," wrote Bertram Scudder, "and nobody can be held socially responsible for the weather"

The rations of coal established by Wesley Mouch, permitted the heating of homes for three hours a day There was no wood to burn, no metal to make new stoves, no tools to pierce the walls of the houses for new installations In makeshift contraptions of bricks and oil cans professors were burning the books of their libraries, and fruit growers were burning the trees of their orchards "Privations strengthen a people's spirit," wrote Bertram Scudder, "and forge the fine steel of social discipline Sacrifice is the cement which unites human bricks into the great edifice of society"

"The nation which had once held the creed that greatness is achieved by production is now told that it is achieved by squalor" said Francisco d'Anconia in a press interview But this was not printed

The only business boom that winter, came to the amusement industry People wrenched their pennies out of the quicksands of their food and heat budgets, and went without meals in order to crowd into movie theaters, in order to escape for a few hours the state of animals reduced to the single concern of terror over their crudest needs In January all movie theaters, night clubs and bowling alleys were closed by order of Wesley Mouch, for the purpose of conserving fuel Pleasure is not an essential of existence," wrote Bertram Scudder

"You must learn to take a philosophical attitude," said Dr Simon Pritchett to a young girl student who broke down into sudden, hysterical sobs in the middle of a lecture She had just returned from a visit to the Superior who had told her son a

dead? How does she know that he ever existed?"

People with pleading eyes and desperate faces crowded into tents where evangelists cried in triumphant gloating that man was unable to cope with nature that his science was a fraud, that his mind was a failure, that he was reaping punishment for the sin of pride, for his confidence in his own intellect—and that only faith in the power of mystic secrets could protect him from the fissure of a rail or from the blowout of the last tire on his last truck Love was the key to the mystic secrets, they cried, love and selfless sacrifice to the needs of others

Orren Boyle made a selfless sacrifice to the needs of others He sold to the Bureau of Global Relief, for shipment to the People's State of Germany ten thousands tons of structural steel shapes that had been intended for the Atlantic Southern Railroad "It was a difficult decision to make," he said, with a moist, unfocused look of righteousness, to the panic-stricken president of the Atlantic Southern "but I weighed the fact that you're a rich corporation while the people of Germany are in a state of unspeakable misery So I

led on the principle that need comes first. When in doubt, it's a weak that must be considered, not the strong." The president of the Atlantic Southern had heard that Orren Boyle's most valuable friend in Washington had a friend in the Ministry of Supply of the people's State of Germany. But whether this had been Boyle's motive or whether it had been the principle of sacrifice, no one could tell and it made no difference. If Boyle had been a saint of the creed of selflessness, he would have had to do precisely what he had done. This silenced the president of the Atlantic Southern, dared not admit that he cared for his railroad more than for the people of Germany, he dared not argue against the principle of sacrifice.

The waters of the Mississippi had been rising all through the month of January, swollen by the storms, driven by the wind into restless grinding of current and against every obstruction in its way. On a night of lashing sleet, in the first week of February, the Mississippi bridge of the Atlantic Southern collapsed under a passenger train. The engine and the first five sleepers went down with the cracking girders into the twisting black spirals of water thirty feet below. The rest of the train remained on the first three spans of the bridge, which held.

"You can't have your cake and let your neighbor eat it, too," said Francisco d'Anconia. The fury of denunciations which the leaders of public voices unleashed against him was greater than his concern over the horror at the river.

It was whispered that the act of sabotage of the Atlantic Southern was a desperate

despair

enforce

by the

regret

After has not been printed. It was whispered that the first three spans of the bridge had held because they had been reinforced with structural shapes of Rearden Metal, but five hundred tons of metal was all that the railroad had been able to obtain under the Fair Share Law.

As the sole result of official investigations two bridges across the Mississippi, belonging to smaller railroads, were condemned as of the railroad.

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rule that whatever else was neglected the Taggart Bridge would always be maintained in flawless shape

The steel shipped across the Atlantic by the Bureau of Global Relief had not reached the Taggart Bridge. It had been seized by Ragnar Danneberg because of the activities of

It was not until the public began to notice the growing disappearance from the market of electric irons, toasters, washing machines and all electrical appliances that people began to ask questions and to hear whispers. They heard that no ship loaded with copper was able to reach a port of the United States; it could not get past Ragnar Danneberg.

In the foggy winter nights on the waterfront sailors whispered the story that Ragnar Danneberg always seized the cargoes of relief vessels but never touched the copper. He sank the ships with their loads; he let the crews escape in lifeboats, but the copper went to the bottom of the ocean. They whispered it as a dark legend beyond men's power to explain; nobody could find a reason why Danneberg did not choose to take the copper.

In the second week of February, for the purpose of conserving copper wire and electric power, a directive forbade the running of elevators above the twenty-fifth floor. The upper floors of the buildings had to be vacated and partitions of unpainted boards went up to cut off the stairways. By special permit exceptions were granted—on the grounds of "essential need"—to a few of the larger business enterprises and the more fashionable hotels. The tops of the cities were cut down.

The inhabitants of New York had never had to be aware of the weather. Storms had been only a nuisance that slowed the traffic and made puddles in the doorways of brightly lighted shops. Struggling against the wind, dressed in raincoats, furs and evening slippers, people had felt that a storm was an intruder within the city. Now, facing the gusts of snow that came sweeping down the narrow streets, people felt in dim terror that they were the temporary intruders and that the wind had the right of way.

"It won't make any difference to us now; forget it. Hark, it doesn't matter," said Dagny when Rearden told her that he would

and sent an engine off the track half a mile from Winston, Colorado, on a division which was to have been relaid with the new rail. The station agent of Winston sighed and sent for a crew with a crane. It was only one of the minor accidents that were happening in his section every other day or so; he was getting used to it.

Rearden that evening, his coat collar raised, his hat slanted low over his eyes, the snow drifts rising to his knees, was tramping through an abandoned open-pit coal mine in a forsaken corner

Pennsylvania, supervising the loading of pirated coal upon the tucks which he had provided. Nobody owned the mine, nobody could afford the cost of working it. But a young man with a brusque nose and dark, angry eyes, who came from a starving settlement, had organized a gang of the unemployed and made a deal with Rearden to deliver the coal. They mined it at night, they stored it in hidden culverts, they were paid in cash, with no questions asked or answered. Guilty of a fierce desire to remain alive, they and Rearden traded like savages, without rights, titles, contracts or protection, with nothing but mutual understanding and a ruthlessly absolute observance of one's given word. Rearden did not even know the name of the young leader. Watching him at the job of loading the tucks, Rearden thought that this boy, if born a generation earlier, could have become a great industrialist, now, he would probably end his brief life as a plain criminal in a few more years.

glanced at Mr Weatherby Mr Weatherby looked as if he had noticed it

"Jim said the chairman "I think you might explain the picture" Mr Weatherby

Taggart's voice still retained a practiced smoothness but it was the smoothness of a piece of cloth stretched tight over a broken glass object and the sharp edges showed through once in a while

I think it is generally conceded that the main factor affecting every railroad in the country is the unusual rate of business failures While we all realize of course that this is only temporary still for the

us our steadiest revenues are now showing an actual operating loss A train schedule geared to a heavy volume of freight cannot be maintained for long it has been seven. We are present did not edges be-shippers

is unfair Most of them have been complaining about their competitors and have passed various local measures to eliminate competition in their particular fields Now most of them are practically in sole possession of their markets yet they refuse to realize that

imitation of astonishment "That is not the stand they have taken" "If certain rumors which I refuse to credit are true—" said the chairman and stopped one syllable after the tone of panic had become obvious in his voice

Jim said Mr Weatherby pleasantly "I think it would be better if we just didn't mention the subject of raising the rates"

"I wasn't suggesting an actual raise at this time" said Taggart hastily "I merely referred to it to round out the picture"

"But Jim said an old man with a quavering voice "I thought that your influence—I mean your friendship—with Mr Mouch would insure"

He stopped because the others were looking at him severely "I did not mention serious ways of him.

he wages and the demand of the shippers for a cut in rates" "ouch sent me or a raise in

He said it in a tone of casual firmness he knew that all these had known it, that the demands had been discussed in the

newspapers for months he knew that the dread in these men's minds was not of the fact, but of his naming it—as if the fact had not existed, but his words held the power to make it exist, he knew that they had waited to see whether he would exercise that power, he was letting them know that he would.

Their situation warranted an outcry of protest, there was none, nobody answered him. Then James Taggart said in that biting, nervous tone which is intended to convey anger, but merely conveys uncertainty: "I wouldn't exaggerate the importance of Buzzy Watts of the National Shippers Council. He's been making a lot of noise and giving a lot of expensive dinners in Washington, but I wouldn't advise taking it too seriously."

"Oh I don't know," said Mr. Weatherby.

"Listen, Clem, I do know that Wesley refused to see him last week."

"That's true. Wesley is a pretty busy man."

"And I know that when Gene Lawson gave that big party ten days ago, practically everybody was there, but Buzzy Watts was not invited."

"That's so," said Mr. Weatherby peaceably.

"So I wouldn't bet on Mr. Buzzy Watts, Clem. And I wouldn't let it worry me."

"Wesley's an impartial man," said Mr. Weatherby. "A man devoted to public duty."

such a businessman, a valuable adviser and one of his closest personal friends." Taggart's eyes shot to him swiftly; this was still worse. "But nobody can say that Wesley would hesitate to sacrifice his personal feelings and friendships—where the welfare of the public is concerned."

Taggart's face went pale.

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But what he asked—and he asked it hastily, was "You're not implying that I would place my personal interests above the public welfare, are you?"

"No, of course not," said Mr. Weatherby, with a look that was almost a smile. "Certainly not. Not you, Jim. Your public spirited attitude—and understanding—are too well known. That's why Wesley expects you to see every side of the picture."

"Yes, of course," said Taggart, trapped.

"Well, consider the unions' side of it. Maybe you can't afford to give them a raise, but how can they afford to exist when the cost of living has shot sky high? They've got to eat, don't they? That comes first, railroad or no railroad." Mr. Weatherby's tone had a



kind of placid righteousness, as if he were reciting a formula required to convey another meaning, clear to all of them, he was looking straight at Taggart, in special emphasis of the unstated. "There are almost a million members in the railway unions. With families dependents and poor relatives—and who hasn't got poor relatives these days?"—it amounts to about five million votes. Persons I mean Wesley has to bear that in mind. He has to think of their psychology. And then consider the public. The rates you're charging were established at a time when everybody was making money. But the way things are now, the cost of transportation has become a burden nobody can afford. People are screaming about it all over the country." He looked straight at Taggart, he merely looked, but his glance had the quality of a wink. "There's an awful lot of them, Jim. They're not very happy at the moment about an awful lot of things. A government that would bring the railroad rates down would make a lot of folks grateful."

The silence that answered him was like a hole so deep that no sound could be heard of the things crashing down to its bottom. Taggart knew, as they all knew, to what disinterested motive Mr. Mouch would always be ready to sacrifice his personal friendships. It was the silence and the fact that she did not want to say it, had come here resolved not to speak, but could not resist it, that made

... "gentlemen?"  
... was an involuntary answer to an unexpected sound, but the swiftness with which they moved away—to look down at the table, at the walls, anywhere but at her—was the conscious answer to the meaning of the sounds. In the silence of the next moment, she felt their resentment like a starch thickening the air of the room, and she knew that it was not resentment against Mr. Weatherby, but against her. She could have borne it, if they had merely let her question go unanswered, but what made her feel a sickening tightness in her stomach, was their double fraud of pretending to ignore her and then answering in their own kind of manner.

The chairman said, not looking at her, his voice pointedly non-committal, yet vaguely purposeful at the same time, "It would have been all right, everything would have worked out fine, if it weren't for the wrong people in positions of power, such as Buzzy Watts and Chick Morrison."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about Chick Morrison," said the pallid

... "of  
... very close to  
... However, Kip

Mr. Weatherby was the only person in the room who did not look at Dagny; but whenever his glance rested upon her, it

registered nothing; she was the only person in the room whom he did not see

"I am thinking," said Mr Weatherby casually, looking at Taggart, "that you might do Wesley a favor"

"Wesley knows that he can always count on me."

"Well, my thought is that if you granted the unions' wage raises we might drop the question of cutting the rates, for the time being"

"I can't do that!" It was almost a cry "The National Alliance of railroads has taken a unanimous stand against the raises and has committed every member to refuse"

"That's just what I mean" said Mr Weatherby softly "Wesley wants to drive a wedge into that Alliance stand If a railroad like the Great Northern . . . it's not so easy

it, by

Mr Weatherby smiled "What court? Let Wesley take care of that"

"But listen, Clem, you know—you know just as well as I do—that we can't afford it!"

Mr Weatherby shrugged. "That's a problem for you to work out"

"How, for Christ's sake?"

"I don't know That's your job, not ours You wouldn't want the government to start telling you how to run your railroad, would you?"

"No, of course not! But—"

"Our job is only to see that the people get fair wages and decent transportation. It's up to you to deliver But, of course, if you say that you can't do the job, why then—"

"I haven't said all" Taggart cried hastily "I haven't said it at all!"

"Good," said Mr Weatherby pleasantly "We know that you have the ability to find some way to do it."

He was looking at Taggart, Taggart was looking at Dagny

"Well, it was just a thought," said Mr Weatherby, leaning back in his chair in a manner of modest withdrawal "Just a thought for you to mull over I'm only a guest here I don't want to interfere The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the situation of the . . . branch lines I believe?"

"Yes," said the chairman and sighed "Yes Now if anyone has a constructive suggestion to offer—" He waited no one answered "I believe the picture is clear to all of us" He waited "It seems to be established that we cannot continue to afford the operation of some of our branch lines the Rio Norte Line in particular . . . and, therefore, some form of action seems to be indicated."

"I think . . . the . . . unexpected . . . Taggart." He . . . why did

not answer, but merely turned to him, he asked, "What do you have to say, Miss Taggart?"

"Nothing."

"I beg your pardon?"

"All I had to say was contained in the report which Jim has read to you." She spoke quietly, her voice clear and flat.

"But you did not make any recommendations."

"I have none to make."

"But, after all, as our Operating Vice President, you have a vital interest in the policies of this railroad."

"I have no authority over the policies of this railroad."

"Oh, but we are anxious to consider your opinion."

"I have no opinions."

"Miss Taggart," he said, in the smoothly formal tone of an order, "you cannot fail to realize that our branch lines are running at a disastrous deficit—and that we expect you to make them pay."

"How?"

"I don't know. That is your job, not ours."

"I have stated in my report the reasons why that is now impossible. If there are facts which I have overlooked, please name them."

"Oh I wouldn't know. We expect you to find some way to make it possible. Our job is only to see that the stockholders get a fair profit. It's up to you to deliver. You wouldn't want us to think that you're unable to do the job and—"

"I am unable to do it."

The man opened his mouth, but found nothing else to say, he looked at her in bewilderment, wondering why the formula had failed.

"Miss Taggart," asked the man with the green muffler, "did you imply in your report that the situation of the Rio Norte Line was critical?"

"I stated that it was hopeless."

"Then what action do you propose?"

"I propose nothing."

"Aren't you evading a responsibility?"

"What is it that you think you're doing?" She spoke evenly, addressing them all. "Are you counting on my not saying that the responsibility is yours, that it was your goddamn polities that brought us where we are? Well, I'm not."

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which would have been sympathy had he still felt a remnant of hope. He said, raising his voice just enough to betray a note of lled indignation, "Mr. Chairman, if it is practical solutions

we are considering I should like to suggest that we discuss the  
tation placed upon the length and speed of our trains. Of any  
le practice, that is the most disastrous one. Its repeal would

...talking about any repeals. We wouldn't consider it. We wouldn't  
...in consider listening to any talk on the subject"

"Mr Chairman," the gray haired man asked quietly "shall I continue?"

The chairman spread out his hands with a smooth smile indicating helplessness "It would be impractical" he answered

"I think we'd better confine the discussion to the status of the No Norte Line," snapped James Taggart.

There was a long silence.

The man with the green muffler turned to Dagny "Miss Taggart," he asked sadly and cautiously "would you say that if—this is just a hypothetical question—if the equipment now in use on the Rio Norte Line were made available it would fill the needs of our transcontinental main line traffic?"

"It would help."

"The rail of the Rio Norte Line" said the pallid man with the mustache "is unmatched anywhere in the country and could not now be purchased at any price. We have three hundred miles of track, which means well over four hundred miles of rail of pure Rearden Metal in that Line. Would you say Miss Taggart, that we cannot afford to waste that superlative rail on a branch that carries no major traffic any longer?"

"That is for you to judge"

"Let me put it this way would it be of value if that rail were made available for our main line track, which is in such urgent need of repair?"

"It would help."

"Miss Taggart" asked the man with the quavering voice, "would you say that there are any shippers of consequence left on the Rio Norte Line?"

"There's Ted Nielsen of Nielsen Motors. No one else."

"Would you say that the operating costs of the Rio Norte Line could be used to relieve the financial strain on the rest of the system?"

"It would help."

"Then, as our Operating Vice President . . ." He stopped, she waited looking at him, he said, "Well?"

"What was your question?"

I meant to say that is well as our Operating Vice President don't you have certain conclusions to draw?"

She stood up She looked at the faces around the table "Gentle-

drawn-out murder I cannot conceive what it is you think you can accomplish by a pretense of this kind and I will not help you stage it The final blow will be delivered by you were all the others

She turned to go The chairman half rose asking helplessly "But Miss Taggart—

Please remain seated Please continue the discuss on—and take the vote in which I shall have no voice I shall abstain from voting. I'll stand by if you wish me to but only as an employee I will not pretend to be anything else

She turned away once more but it was the voice of the gray haired man that stopped her "Miss Taggart this is not an official question it is only my personal curiosity but would you tell me your view of the future of the Taggart Transcontinental system?"

voice gentler  
I system I possible to

to stand aside

and let them continue without her

She looked at the city Jim had obtained the permit which allowed them the use of electric power to the top of the Taggart Building From the height of the room the city looked like a flattened remnant with but a few rare lonely streaks of lighted glass still rising through the darkness to the sky

She did not listen to the voices of the men behind her She did not know for how long the broken snatches of their struggle kept rolling past her—the sounds that nudged and prodded one another trying to edge back and leave someone pushed forward—a struggle not to assert one's own will but to squeeze an assertion from some unwilling victim—a battle in which the decision was to be pronounced not by the winner but by the loser

"It seems to me It is I think It must in my opinion  
If we were to suppose I am merely suggesting  
I am not implying but If we consider both sides It is in  
my opinion indubitable It seems to me to be an unmistakable  
fact"

She did not know whose voice it was but she heard it when the voice pronounced

"and therefore I move that the John Galt Line be closed." Something she thought had made him call the Line by its right name

You had to bear it, too generations ago—it was just as hard for

just as bad, but you did not let it stop you—was it really as bad as this? as ugly?—never mind its different forms, but it's only pain, and you were not stopped by pain, not by whatever kind it was that you had to bear—you were not stopped—you did not give up to it—you faced it and this is the kind I have to face—you fought it I will have to—you did it—I will try. She heard in her own mind the quiet intensity of the words of dedication—and it was no time before she realized that she was speaking to Nat Taggart.

The next voice she heard was Mr Weatherby's "Wait a minute, yes Do you happen to remember that you need to obtain permission before—"

"Surely there's

you're a public service and you're expected to provide transportation, whether you make money or not."

"But you know that it's impossible!"

"Well, that's fine for you, that solves your problem, if you close at Line—but what will it do to us? Leaving a whole state like Colorado practically without transportation—what sort of public sentiment will it arouse? Now, of course if you gave Wesley something in return to balance it, if you granted the unions wage increases—"

"I can't! I gave my word to the National Alliance!"

"Your word? Well, suit yourself. We wouldn't want to force the Alliance. We much prefer to have things happen voluntarily. But these are difficult times and it's hard telling what's liable to happen. With everybody going broke and the tax receipts falling we might—act being that we hold well over fifty per cent of the Taggart bonds—we might be compelled to call for the payment of railroad bonds within six months."

"What?" screamed Taggart.

"—or sooner."

"But you can't! Oh God, you can't! It was understood that the moratorium was for five years! It was a contract an obligation! We were counting on it!"

"An obligation? Aren't you old fashioned Jim? There aren't any obligations, except the necessity of the moment. The original owners of those bonds were counting on their payments too."

"Damn it—"

could not  
Stockton,  
laughter

he asked

"I knew that we would have to pay for those bonds one way or another. We're paying."

"Miss Taggart," said the chairman severely "don't you think that I told you—so are futile? To talk of what would have happened

practical Now we offer you a trade You do something for us and we'll do something for you You give the unions their wage rates and we'll give you permission to close the Rio Norte Line"

"All right," said James Taggart his voice choked

Standing at the window she heard them vote on their decision. She heard them declare that the John Galt Line would end in six weeks on March 31

It's only a matter of getting through the next few moments she thought take care of the next few moments and then the next, a few at a time and after a while it will be easier you'll get over it after a while

The assignment she gave herself for the next few moments was to put on her coat and be first to leave the room

Then there was the assignment of riding in an elevator down the great silent length of the Taggart Building Then there was the assignment of crossing the dark lobby

Halfway through the lobby she stopped A man stood leaning against the wall in a manner of purposeful waiting—and it was she who was his purpose because he was looking straight at her. She did not recognize him at once because she felt certain that the face she saw could not possibly be there in that lobby at that hour

Hi Slug he said softly

She answered groping for some great distance that had once been hers Hi Frisco

"Have they finally murdered John Galt?"

She struggled to place the moment into some orderly sequence of time The question belonged to the present but the solemn face came from those days on the hill by the Hudson when he would have said and I know it

at

then:

"Why did you come here?"

"To see how you'd take it"

"Want to laugh about it?"

"No Dagny I don't want to laugh about it."

She saw no hint of amusement in his face she answered trustingly "I don't know how I'm taking it."

"I do"

"I was expecting it I knew they'd have to do it, so now it's only a matter of getting through"—*tonight* she wanted to say but said—"all the work and details"

He took her arm "Let's go some place where we can have a drink together"

"Francisco why don't you laugh at me? You've always laughed out that Line."

"I will—tomorrow, when I see you going on with all the work details. Not tonight."

"Why not?"

"Come on. You're in no condition to talk about it."

"I—" She wanted to protest, but said, "No, I guess I'm not."

She felt relief, like a swimmer who stops struggling. The spectacle of a man acting with assurance, was a life belt thrown to her at a moment when she had forgotten the hope of its existence. The relief was not in the surrender of responsibility, but in the sight of a man able to assume it.

"Dagny," he said, looking at the city as it moved past their

She chuckled, wondering at his accuracy. He had guessed the nature of the sickening sense that held her, the sense of a swamp which she had to escape.

"Look around you," he said. "A city is the frozen shape of human courage—the courage of those men who thought for the first time of every bolt, rivet and power generator that went to make it. The courage to say, not 'It seems to me,' but *It is*—and to stake one's life on one's judgment. You're not alone. Those men exist. They have always existed. There was a time when human beings crouched in caves, at the mercy of any pestilence and any storm. Could men such as those on your Board of Directors have brought them out of the cave and up to this? He pointed at the city

"God, no!"

"Then *there's* your proof that another kind of men do exist."

"Yes," she said avidly. "Yes."

"Think of them and forget your Board of Directors."

"Francisco, where are they now—the other kind of men?"

"Now they're not wanted."

"I want them. Oh God, how I want them!"

"When you do, you'll find them."

He did not question her about the John Galt Line and she did not speak of it.

He was leaning against the table, watching her, and she felt as if she were leaning against the steady attentiveness of his eyes.

They did not speak of the Line, but she said suddenly, looking down at the liquid in her glass.



"I'm thinking of the night when Nat Taggart was told that he had to abandon the bridge he was building. The bridge across the Mississippi. He had been desperately short of money—because people were afraid of the bridge, they called it an impractical venture. That morning, he was told that the river steamboat concerns had filed suit against him, demanding that his bridge be destroyed as a threat to the public welfare. There were three spans of the bridge built, advancing across the river. That same day, a local mob attacked the structure and set fire to the wooden scaffolding. His workers deserted him, some because they were scared, some because they were bribed by the steamboat people, and most of them because he had had no money to pay them for weeks. Through out that day, he kept receiving word that men who had subscribed to buy the stock of the Taggart Transcontinental Railroad were cancelling their subscriptions, one after another. Toward evening, a committee, representing two banks that were his last hope of support, came to see him. It was right there, on the construction site by the river, in the old railway coach where he lived, with the door open to the view of the blackened ruin, with the wooden remnants still smoking over the twisted steel. He had negotiated a loan from those banks, but the contract had not been signed. The committee told him that he would have to give up his bridge, because he was certain to lose the suit, and the bridge would be ordered torn down by the time he completed it. If he was willing to give it up, they said, and to ferry his passengers across the river on barges as other railroads were doing, the contract would stand and he would get the money to continue his line west on the other shore, if not, then the loan was off. What was his answer?—they asked. He did not say a word. He picked up the contract, tore it across, handed it to them and walked out. He walked to the bridge, along the spans, down to the last girder. He knelt, he picked up the tools his men had left and he started to clear the charred wreckage away from the steel structure. His chief engineer saw him there, axe in hand, alone over the wide river, with the sun setting behind him in that west where his line was to go. He worked there all night. By morning he had thought out a plan of what he would do to find the right men, the men of independent judgment—to find them, to convince them, to raise the money, to continue the bridge."

She spoke in a low, flat voice, looking down at the spot of light that shimmered in the liquid as her fingers turned the stem of her glass once in a while. She showed no emotion, but her voice had the intense monotone of a prayer—

"Francisco . . . if he could live through that night, what right have I to complain? What does it matter, how I feel just now? He built that bridge. I have to hold it for him. I can't let it go the way of the bridge of the Atlantic Southern. I feel almost as if he'd know it, if I let that happen, he'd know it that night when he was alone over the river . . . no, that's nonsense, but here's what I feel. Any man who knows what Nat Taggart felt that night, any man living now and capable of knowing it—it's him that I would be . . . if I let it happen . . . and I can't."

"Dagny if Nat Taggart were living now, what would he do?" she answered involuntarily, with a swift bitter chuckle "He uldn't last a minute! —then corrected herself "No, he would. would find a way to fight them."

"How?"

"I don't know"

She noticed some tense cautious quality in the attentive way he watched her as he leaned forward and asked 'Dagny, the men of our Board of Directors are no match for Nat Taggart, are they? There's no form of contest in which they could beat him, there's nothing he'd have to fear from them, there's no mind, no will, no power in the bunch of them to equal one-thousandth of his'

"No of course not."

"Then why is it that throughout men's history the Nat Taggarts, to make the world have always won—and always lost it to the men of the Board?"

"I don't know"

"How could men who're afraid to hold an unqualified opinion out the weather, fight Nat Taggart? How could they seize his achievement, if he chose to defend it? Dagny, he fought with every tapon he possessed, except the most important one. They could st have won, if we—he and the rest of us—had not given the world way to them."

"Yes You gave it away to them. Ellis Wyatt did. Ken Danagger  
d. I won't"

He smiled. "Who built the John Galt Line for them?"

He saw only the faintest contraction of her mouth but he knew that the question was like a blow across an open wound. Yet she answered quietly, "I did."

"For this kind of end?"

"For the men who did not hold out, would not fight and gave

"Don't you see that no other end was possible?"

**N**

"How much injustice are you willing to take?"

"As much as I'm able to fight."

"What will you do now? Tomorrow?"

She said calmly, looking straight at him with the faintly proud look of stressing her calm, "Start to tear it up."

"What?"

"The John Galt Line Start to tear it up as good as with my own hands—with my own mind, by my own instructions Get it ready to be closed than ————— on the trans

... ..

"Daggy," he asked very quietly—and she wondered what made

her feel that he looked as if his personal fate hung on her answer, "what if it were the main line that you had ~~in~~ dismember?"

She answered irresistibly, "Then I'd let the last engine run over me!"—but added, "No That's just self pity I wouldn't"

He said gently, "I know you wouldn't But you'd wish you could."

"Yes"

He smiled, not looking at her; it was a mocking smile, but it was a smile of pain and the mockery was directed at himself. She wondered what made her certain of it, but she knew his face so well that she would always know what he felt, even though she could not guess his reasons any longer. She knew his face as well, she thought, as she knew every line of his body, as she could still see it as she was suddenly aware of it under his clothes, a few feet away, in the crowding intimacy of the booth. He turned to look at her and some sudden change in his eyes made her certain that he knew what she was thinking. He looked away and picked up his glass.

"Well—" he said, "to Nat Taggart"

"And to Sebastian d'Anconia?" she asked—then regretted it, because it had sounded like mockery, which she had not intended.

But she saw a look of odd, bright clarity in his eyes and he answered firmly, with the faintly proud smile of stressing his firmness, "Yes—and to Sebastian d'Anconia"

Her hand trembled a little and she spilled a few drops on the square of paper lace that lay on the dark shining plastic of the table. She watched him empty his glass in a single gesture the brusque, brief movement of his hand made it look like the gesture of some solemn pledge.

She thought suddenly that this was the first time in twelve years that he had come to her of his own choice.

He had acted as if he were confidently in control, as if his confidence were a transfusion to let her recapture hers, he had given her no time to wonder that they should be here together. Now she

It was  
ness out  
b his face  
was now

struggling for something he had to recapture.

She wondered what had been his purpose tonight—and noticed that he had, perhaps, accomplished it. He had carried her over the worst moment, he had given her an invaluable defense against despair—the knowledge that a living intelligence had heard her and understood. But why had he wanted to do it? Why had he cared about her hour of despair—after the years of agony he had given her? Why had it mattered to him how she would take the death of the John Galt Line? She noticed that this was the question she had not asked him in the lobby of the Taggart Building.

This was the bond between them, she thought that she would be astonished if he came when she needed him most, and he would always know when to come. This was the danger

at she would trust him, even while knowing that it could be nothing but some new kind of trap, even while remembering that he could always betray those who trusted him

He sat, leaning forward with his arms crossed on the table, looking straight ahead. He said suddenly, not turning to her

"I am thinking of the fifteen years that Sebastián d'Anconia had wait for the woman he loved. He did not know whether he would ever find her again, whether she would survive whether she could wait for him. But he knew that she could not live through his battle and that he could not call her to him until it was won. So he waited holding his love in the place of the hope which he had no right to hold. But when he carried her across the threshold of his house, as the first Señora d'Anconia of a new world, he knew that the battle was won, that they were free, that nothing threatened her and nothing would ever hurt her again."

In the days of their passionate happiness, he had never given her hint that he would come to think of her as Señora d'Anconia. For one moment, she wondered whether she had known what she had meant to him. But the moment ended in an invisible shudder she would not believe that the past twelve years could allow the things he was hearing to be possible. This was the new trap, she thought. "Francisco," she asked, her voice hard, "what have you done to Hank Rearden?"

He looked startled that she should think of that name at that moment. "Why?" he asked.

"He told me once that you were the only man he'd ever liked. But last time I saw him, he said he would kill you on sight."

"He did not tell you why?"

"No."

"He told you nothing about it?"

"No." She saw him smiling strangely a smile of sadness gratitude and longing. "I warned him that you would hurt him—when he told me that you were the only man he liked."

His words came like a sudden explosion. "He was the only man—with one exception—to whom I could have given my life!"

"Who is the exception?"

"The man to whom I have."

"What do you mean?"

He shook his head, as if he had said more than he intended, and did not answer.

"What did you do to Rearden?"

"I'll tell you some time. Not now."

"Is that what you always do to those who mean a great deal to you?"

He looked at her with a smile that had the luminous sincerity of innocence and pain. "You know," he said gently. "I could say that that is what they always do to me." He added, "But I won't. The actions—and the knowledge—were mine."

He stood up. "Shall we go? I'll take you home."

She rose and he held her coat for her, it was a wide loose garment, and his hands guided it to enfold her body. She felt his arm

room of a house with a sagging roof and cracking walls. She wondered how long they expected the electric power companies of Colorado to remain in existence. Then she shook her head. Those people had never known that power companies existed.

The main street of Marshville was lined by the black windows of  
—she thought,  
—what things  
—what manner

those things once available to the poorest had been luxuries. Dry Cleaning—Electrical Appliances—Gas Station—Drug Store—Five and Ten. The only ones left open were grocery stores and saloons.

The platform of the railroad station was crowded. The glaring arc lights seemed to pick it out of the mountains to isolate and focus it like a small stage on which every movement was naked to the sight of the unseen tiers rising in the vast encircling night. People were carting luggage, bundling their children, haggling at ticket windows, the stifled panic of their manner suggesting that what they really wanted to do was to fall down on the ground and scream with terror. Their terror had the evasive quality of guilt. It was not the fear that comes from understanding but from the refusal to understand.

The last train stood at the platform, its windows a long lost streak of light. The steam of the locomotive, gasping tensely through the wheels, did not have its usual joyous sound of energy released for a sprint. It had the sound of a panting breath that one dreads to hear and dreads more to stop hearing. Far at the end of the lighted windows she saw the small red dot of a lantern attached to her private car. Beyond the lantern there was nothing but a black void.

The train was loaded to capacity and the shrill notes of hysteria  
—vestibules and  
—priority  
—was the  
—perhaps,

in their lives.

She walked hastily through the crowd, trying not to look at any one. Some knew who she was; most of them did not. She saw an old woman with a ragged shawl on her shoulders and the graph of a lifetime's struggle on the cracked skin of her face. The woman's glance was a hopeless appeal for help. An unshaved young man with gold-rimmed glasses stood on a crate under an arc light, yelling at the faces shifting past him: "What do they mean, no business! Look at that train! It's full of passengers! There's plenty of business! It's just that there's no profits for them—that's why they're letting you perish, those greedy parasites!" A disheveled woman rushed up to Dagny, waving two tickets and screaming something about the wrong date. Dagny found herself pushing people out of the way, fighting to reach the end of the train. A man with the staring eyes of yeasting said: "It's all right for you, but you won't get

stopped abruptly, looking at someone behind her. She felt a hand upon her elbow—it was Hank Rearden. He held her arm and led toward her car, seeing the look on his face she understood why people got out of their way. At the end of the platform a pallid, emaciated man stood saying to a crying woman: "That's how it always has been in this world. There will be no chance for the poor, and the rich are destroyed." High above the town hanging in black like an uncooled planet, the flame of Wyatt's Torch was twisted in the wind.

Rearden went inside her car, but she remained on the steps of the platform delaying the finality of turning away. She heard the "All aboard!" She looked at the people who remained on the platform—their faces like those who watch the departure of the last lifeboat. The conductor stood below, at the foot of the steps with his lantern in one hand and his watch in the other. He glanced at the clock then glanced up at her face. She answered by the silent motion of closing her eyes and inclining her head. She saw his lantern circling through the air as she turned away—and the first of the wheels on the rails of Rearden Metal was made easier for her by the sight of Rearden, as she pulled the door open and stepped into her car.

When James Taggart telephoned Lilhan Rearden from New York he said, "Why no—no special reason just wondered how you were getting on. Whether you ever came to the city—haven't seen you for ages. I just thought we might have lunch together next time you're in New York"—she knew that he had some very special reason in mind.

When she answered lazily "Oh, let me see—what day is this?—the second?—let me look at my calendar—why it just so happens that I have some shopping to do in New York tomorrow so I'll be delighted to let you save me my lunch money"—he knew that she had no shopping to do and that the luncheon would be the only

restaurant much too mentioned in the gossip. Taggart always eager

for personal publicity was in the habit of patronizing her. He did not want them to be seen together, she concluded. The half hint of half-secret amusement remained on her face while she listened to him talking about their friends—the theater and the theater, carefully building for himself the protection of the unimportant. She sat gracefully not quite straight as if she were leaning back, enjoying the futility of his performance and the fact that he had to stage it for her benefit. She waited with patient curiosity to discover his purpose.

"I do think that you deserve a pat on the back or a medal or something, Jim," she said "for being remarkably cheerful in spite of all the messy trouble you're having. Didn't you just close the best branch of your railroad?"

"Oh, it's only a slight financial setback, nothing more. One has to

expect retrenchments at a time like this. Considering the general state of the country, we're doing quite well. Better than the rest of them. He added shrugging. Besides, it's a matter of opinion whether the Rio Norte Line was our best branch. It is only my sister who thought so. It was her pet project."

She caught the tone of pleasure blurring the drawl of his syllable. She smiled and said, "I see."

Looking up at her from under his lowered forehead as if stressing that he expected her to understand, Taggart asked, "How is it taking it?"

"Who? She understood quite well."

"Your husband."

"Taking what?"

"The closing of that Line."

She smiled gaily. "Your guess is as good as mine. Jim—and mine is very good indeed."

"What do you mean?"

"You know how he would take it—just as you know how your sister is taking it. So your cloud has a double silver lining, hasn't it?"

"What has he been saying in the last few days?"

"He's been away in Colorado for over a week, so I—" She stopped. She had started answering lightly, but she noticed that Taggart's question had been too specific while his tone had been too casual, and she realized that she had been leading the briefest of know. But

"would you say that his attitude is still what one might call recalcitrant?"

"Why, Jim, that would be an understatement!"

It was to be hoped that events had, perhaps, taught him the wisdom of a mellowed approach."

It amused her to keep him in doubt about her understanding. "Oh, yes," she said innocently, "it would be wonderful if anything could ever make him change."

"He is making things exceedingly hard for himself."

"He always has."

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you suffer the consequences of his intransigent attitude. I would hate—as your friend—to see you in the kind of danger he's headed for unless he learns to cooperate."

"How sweet of you, Jim," she said sweetly.

He was doling his sentences out with cautious slowness, balancing himself between word and intonation to hit the right degree of mi-clarity. He wanted her to understand but he did not want her understand fully, explicitly, down to the root—since the essence that modern language, which he had learned to speak expertly, is never to let oneself or others understand anything down to the bottom.

He had not needed many words to understand Mr. Weatherby on his last trip to Washington, he had pleaded with Mr. Weatherby that a cut in the rates of the railroads would be a deathblow, the age raises had been granted, but the demands for the cut in rates were still heard in the press—and Taggart had known what it meant, if Mr. Mouch still permitted them to be heard, he had known that the knife was still poised at his throat. Mr. Weatherby had not answered his pleas, but had said, in a tone of idly irrelevant speculation, "Wesley has so many tough problems. If he is to give everybody a breathing spell, financially speaking he's got to put into operation a certain emergency program of which you have some inkling. But you know what hell the unprogressive elements of the country would raise about it. A man like Rearden, for instance, we don't want any more stunts of the sort he's liable to pull. Wesley would give a lot for somebody who could keep Rearden in line but I guess that's all right." "Though I may be a sort of friend

"Friendship, I understand, is the most valuable thing in life—and I would be amiss if I didn't give you proof of mine."

"But I've never doubted it."

He lowered his voice to the tone of an ominous warning. "I think I should tell you as a favor to a friend, although it's confidential, that your husband's attitude is being discussed in high places—very high places. I'm sure you know what I mean."

This was why he hated Lillian Rearden thought Taggart she knew the game, but she played it with unexpected variations of her own. It was against all rules to look at him suddenly to laugh in his face and—after all those remarks showing that she understood too little—to say bluntly, showing that she understood too much, "Why, darling, of course I know what you mean. You mean that the purpose of this very excellent luncheon was not a favor you wanted to do me, but a favor you wanted to get from me. You mean that it's you who are in danger and could use that favor to great advantage for a trade in high places. And you mean that you are reminding me of my promise to deliver the goods."

"The sort of performance he put on at his trial was hardly what I'd call delivering the goods," he said angrily. "It wasn't what you had led me to expect."

"Oh my, no it wasn't," she said placidly. "It certainly wasn't. But, darling, did you expect me not to know that after that performance of his he wouldn't be very popular in high places? I really think you had to tell me that as a confidential



"But it's true I heard him discussed, so I thought I'd tell you."  
"I'm sure it's true I know that they would be discussing him. I

in no danger  
afraid of him  
darling?"

"Well, if you think you do, I must say that for my part I don't understand you at all I don't know what it is you're doing"

"Why, I'm just setting things straight—so that you'll know that I know how much you need me. And now that it's straight, I'll tell you the truth in my turn I didn't double-cross you, I merely failed His performance at the trial—I didn't expect it any more than you did Less I had good reason not to expect it. But something went wrong I don't know what it was I am trying to find out. When I do, I will keep my promise Then you'll be free to take full credit for it and to tell your friends in high places that it's you who've disarmed him"

"Lillian," he said nervously, "I meant it when I said that I was anxious to give you proof of my friendship—so if there's anything I can do for—"

She laughed "There isn't. I know you meant it But there's nothing you can do for me No favor of any kind No trade I'm a truly non-commercial person, I want nothing in return Tough luck, Jim You'll just have to remain at my mercy"

"But then why should you want to do it at all? What are you getting out of it?"

She leaned back, smiling "This lunch Just seeing you here Just knowing that you had to come to me"

An angry spark flashed in Taggart's veiled eyes, then his eyelids narrowed slowly and he, too, leaned back in his chair, his face relaxing to a faint look of mockery and satisfaction. Even from within that unstated, unnamed, undefined muck which represented his code of values, he was able to realize which one of them was the more dependent on the other and the more contemptible.

When they parted at the door of the restaurant, she went to Rearden's suite at the Wayne-Falkland Hotel, where she stayed occasionally in his absence She paced the room for about half an hour, in a leisurely manner of reflection Then she picked up the telephone, with a smoothly casual gesture, but with the purposeful air of a decision reached She dialed the number of the man at the mills and asked Mrs.

"I am  
Cor  
fav  
expect me for dinner? I'm staying in New York overnight."

She hung up, glanced at her watch and called the florist of the Wayne-Falkland "This is Mrs Henry Rearden" she said "I should like to have two dozen roses delivered to Mr. Rearden's drawing

arriving on the  
teous voice.  
ld you do me a  
I tell her not to

on aboard the Comet. . . . Yes, today, this afternoon, when the Comet reaches Chicago . . . No, without any card—just the wires . . . Thank you ever so much."

She telephoned James Taggart "Jim, will you send me a pass to our passenger platforms? I want to meet my husband at the station tomorrow."

She hesitated between Ralph Eubank and Bertram Scudder, chose Ralph Eubank, telephoned him and made a date for this evening's dinner and a musical show. Then she went to take a bath, and lay relaxing in a tub of warm water, reading a magazine devoted to problems of political economy.

It was late afternoon when the florist telephoned her "Our Chicago office sent word that they were unable to deliver the flowers, Mrs. Rearden," he said, "because Mr. Rearden is not aboard the Comet."

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"Quite sure, Mrs. Rearden. Our man found at the station in Chicago that there was no compartment on the train reserved in Mr. Rearden's name. We checked with the New York office of Taggart Transcontinental, just to make certain, and were told that Mr. Rearden's name is not on the passenger list of the Comet."

"I see . . . Then cancel the order, please. Thank you."

She sat by the telephone for a moment, frowning, then called

yes

just

on

"Yes, Mrs. Rearden."

"You have not heard of any delay or change in his plans?"

"Why, no. In fact, I spoke to Mr. Rearden about an hour ago. He telephoned from the station in Chicago and he mentioned that he had to hurry back aboard, as the Comet was about to leave."

"I see. Thank you."

She leaped to her feet as soon as the click of the instrument restored her to privacy. She started pacing the room, her steps now arrhythmically tense. Then she stopped, struck by a sudden thought. There was only one reason why a man would make a train reservation under an assumed name: if he was not traveling alone.

Her facial muscles went flowing slowly into a smile of satisfaction. This was an opportunity she had not expected.

few figures, the train had seemed to burst at the seams, 1000000

Her first sight of Rearden in the crowd came as a shock she had not seen him step out of a car but there he was walking in the direction from somewhere far down the length of the tram. He was alone.

speed has been  
woman beside him  
ing along with

In a fury of incredulous disappointment she looked frantically for any single feminine figure he could have left behind. She was certain that she would find one. She was that certain.

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Dagn

understood.

Lillian! What's the matter?

She heard Rearden's voice she felt his hand grasping her arm she saw him looking at her as one looks at the object of a sudden emergency. He was looking at a blank face and an unfocused glare of terror.

"What happened? What are you doing here?"

"I Hello Henry I just came to meet you No special reason I just wanted to meet you" The terror was gone from her face but she spoke in a strange flat voice "I wanted to see you it was an impulse a sudden impulse and I couldn't resist because—"

But you look looked ill"

"No I could

son

She knew that she had to speak while her mind was fighting to grasp the full meaning of her discovery. The words were part of a plan she had made.

glancing away from him down the length of the platform "I wanted to merely wanted to surprise you" A look of shrewdness and purpose was returning to her face.

He took her arm but she drew back a little too sharply.

"Aren't you going to say a word to me Henry?"

"What do you wish me to say?"

"Do you hate it as much as that—having your wife come to meet  
the station?" She glanced down the platform. Dagny Taggart  
was walking toward them, he did not see her.

"Let's go," he said.

He would not move. "Do you?" she asked.

"What?"

"Do you hate it?"

"No, I don't hate it. I merely don't understand it."

"Tell me about your trip. I'm sure you've had a very enjoyable  
one."

"Come on. We can talk at home."

"When do I ever have a chance to talk to you at home?" She  
was drawing her words impassively, as if she were stretching them  
out for some reason which he could not imagine. "I had  
hoped to catch a few moments of your attention—like this—be-  
cause it is so important."

"How do you do?" she said to Lillian, bowing her face expres-  
sionless.

"I am so sorry, Miss Taggart," said Lillian, smiling. "You must  
forgive me if I don't know the appropriate formula of condolences  
on the occasion. She noted that Dagny and Rearden had not  
met each other. "You're returning from what was, in effect, the  
death of a friend."

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met each other. "You're returning from what was, in effect, the  
death of a friend."

It was certain, as he looked at the tightly twisted set of her mouth,  
that some uncanny violence was raging within her. He had  
never known her to experience a strong emotion of any kind.

She whirled to face him the moment they were alone in his room.  
"You're returning from what was, in effect, the death of a friend."

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met each other. "You're returning from what was, in effect, the  
death of a friend."

He did not answer.

"I happen to know that you had no compartment on that train,  
so I know where you've slept for the last four nights. Do you want  
to admit it or do you want me to send detectives to question her  
train crew and her house servants? Is it Dagny Taggart?"

"Yes," he answered calmly.

Her mouth twisted into an ugly chuckle, she was staring past him.

"I should have known it. I should have guessed. That's why it didn't work!"

He asked, in blank bewilderment, "What didn't work?"

She stepped back, as if to remind herself of his presence. "Had you—when she was in our house, at the party—had you, then . . . ?"

"No. Since

"The great businesswoman," she said, "above reproach and feminine weaknesses. The great mind detached from any concern with the body . . ." She chuckled. "The bracelet . . ." she said, with the still look that made it sound as if the words were dropped accidentally out of the torrent in her mind. "That's what she meant to you. That's the weapon she gave you."

"If you really understand what you're saying—yes."

"Do you think I'll let you get away with it?"

"Get away . . . ?" He was looking at her incredulously, in cold, astonished curiosity.

"That's why, at your trial—" She stopped.

"What about my trial?"

She was trembling. "You know, of course, that I won't allow this to continue."

"What does it have to do with my trial?"

"I won't permit you to have her. Not her. Anyone but her."

He let a moment pass, then asked evenly, "Why?"

"I won't permit it! You'll give it up!" He was looking at her without expression, but the steadiness of his eyes hit her as his most dangerous answer. "You'll give it up, you'll leave her, you'll never see her again!"

"Lillian, if you wish to discuss it, there's one thing you'd better understand: nothing on earth will make me give it up."

"But I demand it!"

"I told you that you could demand anything but that."

He saw the look of a peculiar panic growing in her eyes. It was not the look of understanding, but of a ferocious refusal to understand—as if she wanted to turn the violence of her emotion into a fog screen, as if she hoped, not that it would blind her to reality, but that her blindness would make reality cease to exist.

"But I have the right to demand it! I own your life! It's my property. My property—by your own oath. You swore to serve my happiness. Not yours—mine! What have you done for me? You've

never been con-  
or mulls, your tal-  
am! I'm present-

It was the look on his face that drove her up the rising steps of her voice, scream by scream, into terror. She was seeing, not anger or pain or guilt, but the one inviolate enemy: indifference.

"Have you thought of me?" she screamed, her voice breaking against his face. "Have you thought of what you're doing to me? You have no right to go on, if you know that you're putting me through hell every time you sleep with that woman! I can't stand

"I can't stand one moment of knowing it! Will you sacrifice me to

your animal desire? Are you as vicious and selfish as that? Can you buy your pleasure at the price of my suffering? Can you have it, if

livered, in snarling hatred, as threats and as demands

"Lillian," he said very quietly, "I would have it, even if it took your life."

She heard it. She heard more than he was ready to know and to hear in his own words. The shock, to him, was that she did not scream in answer, but that he saw her, instead, shrinking down into calm. "You have no right . . ." she said dully. It had the embarrassing helplessness of the words of a person who knows her own words to be meaningless.

"Whatever claim you may have on me," he said, "no human being can hold on another a claim demanding that he wipe himself out of existence."

"Does she mean as much as that to you?"

"Much more than that."

The look of thought was not on his face, but in her face it

It is all I can offer you. I think you know I want you to divorce me. But I don't ask for sacrifices. I don't know what sort of comfort you can find in our marriage, but if you do, I won't ask you to give it up. I don't know why you should want to hold me now, I don't know what it is that I mean to you. I don't know what you're seeking. What form of happiness is it that you will obtain from a

standards . . . I . . . never . . . if  
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n . . . of course

to me about her, you must never show her that you know . . .  
meet her . . . at never touch that part of my life"

her body  
ince as if  
a graceful

bearing  
"Miss Dagny Taggart . . ." she said, and chuckled "The super  
woman whom common, average wives were not supposed to

pect The woman who cared for nothing but business and dealt with men as a man The woman of great spirit who admired you platonically just for your genius, your mulls and your Metal! She chuckled 'I should have known that she was just a bitch who wanted you in the same way as any bitch would want you—because you are fully as expert in bed as you are at a desk, if I am a judge of such matters But she would appreciate that better than I, since she worships expertness of any kind and since she has probably been laid by every section hand on her railroad!"

She stopped, because she saw, for the first time in her life, by what sort of look one learns that a man is capable of killing But he was not looking at her She was not sure whether he was seeing her at all or hearing her voice

He was hearing his own voice saying her words—saying them to Dagny in the sun striped bedroom of Ellis Wyatt's house He was seeing in the nights behind him, Dagny's face in those moments when, his body leaving hers, she lay still with a look of radiance that was more than a smile a look of youth, of early morning, of gratitude to the fact of one's own existence And he was seeing Lillian's face as he had seen it in bed beside him, a lifeless face with evasive eyes, with some feeble sneer on its lips and the look of sharing some smutty guilt He saw who was the accuser and who the accused—he saw the obscenity of letting impotence hold itself as virtue and damn the power of living as a sin—he saw, with the clarity of direct perception, in the shock of a single instant, the

relief  
a knowledge  
ock brought  
words She  
resence that

had to be dealt with at the moment

"Lillian," he said, in an unstressed voice that did not grant her even the honor of anger, "you are not to speak of her to me If you ever do it again, I will answer you as I would answer a hoodlum I will beat you up Neither you nor anyone else is to discuss her"

She glanced at him "Really?" she said It had an odd, casual sound—as if the word were tossed away, leaving some hook implanted in her mind She seemed to be considering some sudden vision of her own

He said quietly, in weary astonishment, "I thought you would be glad to discover the truth I thought you would prefer to know—for the sake of whatever love or respect you felt for me—that if I betrayed you, it was not cheaply and casually, it was not for a chorus girl, but for the cleanest and most serious feeling of my life"

The ferocious spring with which she whirled to him was involuntary, as was the naked twist of hatred in her face "Oh, you god damn fool!"

He remained silent

Her composure returned, with the faint suggestion of a smile of mockery "I believe you're waiting for my answer?" she said.

"No, I won't divorce you. Don't ever hope for that. We shall continue as we are—if that is what you offered and if you think it can continue. See whether you can flout all moral principles and get away with it!"

He did not listen to her while she reached for her coat, telling him that she was going back to their home. He barely noticed it when she went.

him what Lillian felt, what she suffered or what became of her, and more not only that it did not matter, but the shining, guiltless knowledge that it did not have to matter.

## Chapter VI MIRACLE METAL

"But can we get away with it?" asked Wesley Mouch. His voice was high with anger and thin with fear.

ch.  
Bo  
ing  
hands Fred Kinnan, head of the Amalgamated Labor of America, stopped pacing the office, sat down on the window sill and crossed his arms. Eugene Lawson, who had sat hunched downward, absent-mindedly rearranging a display of flowers on a low glass table, raised his torso resentfully and glanced up. Mouch sat at his desk, with his fist on a sheet of paper.

It was Eugene Lawson who answered. "That's not, it seems to me, the way to put it. We must not let vulgar difficulties obstruct our feeling that it's a noble plan motivated solely by the public welfare. It's for the good of the people. The people need it. Need comes first,

Lawson had a small man who sat unobtrusively in the best armchair of the room, apart from the others, content to be ignored and fully aware that none of them could be unconscious of his presence, glanced at Lawson, then at Mouch, and said with brisk cheerfulness, "That's the line, Wesley. Tone it down and dress it up and get your press boys to chant it—and you won't have to worry."

"Yes, Mr. Thompson," said Mouch glumly. Mr Thompson, the Head of the State, was a man who possessed the quality of never being noticed. In any group of three, his person became indistinguishable, and when seen alone it seemed to evoke a group of its own.



The country had no clear image of what he looked like his photographs had appeared on the covers of magazines as frequently as those of his predecessors in office, but people could never be quite certain which photographs were his and which were pictures of "a mail clerk" or "a white-collar worker," accompanying articles about the daily life of the undifferentiated—except that Mr Thompson's collars were usually wilted. He had broad shoulders and a slight body. He had stringy hair, a wide mouth and an elastic age range that made him look like a harassed forty or an unusually vigorous sixty. Holding enormous official powers, he schemed ceaselessly to expand them, because it was expected of him by those who had pushed him into office. He had the cunning of the unintelligent and the frantic energy of the lazy. The sole secret of his rise in life was the fact that he was a product of chance and knew it and aspired to nothing else.

"It's obvious that measures have to be taken. Drastic measures," said James Taggart, speaking, not to Mr Thompson, but to Wesley Mouch. "We can't let things go the way they're going much longer." His voice was belligerent and shaky.

"Take it easy, Jim," said Orren Boyle.

"Somethings got to be done and done fast!"

"Don't look at *me*," snapped Wesley Mouch. "I can't help it. I can't help it if people refuse to co-operate. I'm tied. I need wider powers."

Mouch had summoned them all to Washington, as his friends and personal advisers, for a private, unofficial conference on the national crisis. But, watching him, they were unable to decide whether his manner was overbearing or whining, whether he was threatening them or pleading for their help.

"Fact is," said Mr Weatherby primly, in a statistical tone of voice, "that in the twelve month period ending on the first of this year, the rate of business failures has doubled, as compared with the preceding twelve month period. Since the first of this year, it has trebled."

"Be sure they think it's their own fault," said Dr Ferris casually.

"Huh?" said Wesley Mouch, his eyes darting at Ferris.

"Whatever you do, don't apologize," said Dr Ferris. "Make them feel guilty."

"I'm not apologizing!" snapped Mouch. "I'm not to blame. I need wider powers."

"But it is their own fault," said Eugene Lawson, turning aggressively to Dr Ferris. "It's their lack of social spirit. They refuse to recognize that production is not a private choice, but a public duty. They have no right to fail, no matter what conditions happen to come up. They've got to go on producing. It's a social imperative. A man's work is not a personal matter, it's a social matter. There's no such thing as a personal matter—or a personal life. That's what we've got to force them to learn."

"Gene Lawson knows what I'm talking about," said Dr Ferris, with a slight smile, "even though he hasn't the faintest idea that he

"What do you think you mean?" asked Lawson, his voice rising

"Skip it," ordered Wesley Mouch

"I don't care what you decide to do, Wesley," said Mr Thompson, "and I don't care if the businessmen squawk about it Just be sure you've got the press with you Be damn sure about that"

"I've got 'em," said Mouch

"One editor who'd open his trap at the wrong time could do us more harm than ten disgruntled millionaires"

"That's true, Mr Thompson," said Dr Ferris "But can you name one editor who knows it?"

"Guess not," said Thompson, he sounded pleased

"Whatever type of men we're counting on and planning for," said Dr Ferris, "there's a certain old fashioned quotation which we may safely forget the one about counting on the wise and the honest. We don't have to consider them They're out of date"

James Taggart glanced at the window There were patches of blue in the sky above the spacious streets of Washington, the faint blue of mid April, and a few beams breaking through the clouds A monument stood shining in the distance, hit by a ray of sun It was a tall white column of the man Dr Ferris city had been named

"I could make the professor's remarks," said Lawson loudly and sullenly

"Keep still," said Wesley Mouch "Dr Ferris is not talking theory, but practice."

"Well, if you want to talk practice," said Fred Kinnan "then let me tell you that we can't worry about businessmen at a time like this What we've got to think about is jobs More jobs for the people In my unions, every man who's working is feeding five who aren't, not counting his own pack of starving relatives If you want my advice—oh, I know you won't go for it, but it's just a thought—issue a directive making it compulsory to add, say one-third more men to every payroll in the country"

"Good God!" yelled Taggart. "Are you crazy? We can barely meet our payrolls as it is! There's not enough work for the men we've got now! One third more? We wouldn't have any use for them whatever!"

"Who cares whether you'd have any use for them?" said Fred Kinnan "They need jobs That's what comes first—need—doesn't it?—not your profits"

"It's not a question of profits!" yelled Taggart hastily "I haven't said anything about profits I haven't given you any grounds to insult me It's just a question of where in hell we'd get the money to pay your men—when half our trains are running empty and there's not enough freight to fill a trolley car" His voice slowed down and faded into a long, thoughtful silence "However, we do

on the rates you're charging now, I shudder every time a dam

Just look in my balance sheet--and then look at the books of all the ray

to get a subsidy to carry me over the next year or two, and catch my stride and—"

"What? Again?" yelled the wife at the husband. "How

boys have no excuse for permitting all that need and misery to spread through the country—so long as there are people who aren't broke."

"I can't help it!" yelled Wesley Mouch. "I can't do anything about it! I need wider powers!"

They could not tell what he was saying and so attended to the other things in the room. He was smiling and seemed interested.

"Go ahead, Wesley," he said. "Go ahead with Number 10-289. You won't have any trouble at all."

They had all risen to their feet, in gloomily reluctant deference. Wesley Mouch glanced down at his sheet of paper, then said in a petulant tone of voice, "If you want me to go ahead, you'll have to declare a state of total emergency."

"I'll declare it any time you're ready."

"There are certain difficulties, which—"

"I'll leave it up to you. Work it out any way you wish. It's your job. Let me see the rough draft, tomorrow or next day, but don't bother me about the details. I've got a speech to make on the radio."

actually  
directive

On well, we've passed so many emergency laws that if you hunt through them, you're sure to dig up something that will cover it." Mr. Thompson turned to the speaker.

"I'll leave you boys to iron out the wrinkles," he said. "I

appreciate your coming to Washington to help us out. Glad to have  
seen you."

They waited until the door closed after him, then resumed their  
role that of a . . .

method, they now wished it were possible for them not to hear the  
words of the directive. It was to avoid moments such as this that all  
be complex twistings of their minds had been devised.

They wished the directive to go into effect. They wished it could  
be put into effect without words, so that they would not have to  
know that what they were doing was what it was. Nobody had ever  
announced that Directive No. 10-289 was the final goal of his efforts.  
Yet, for generations past, men had worked to make it possible, and  
for months past, every provision of it had been prepared for by  
countless speeches, articles, sermons, editorials—by purposeful  
voices that screamed with anger if anyone named their purpose.

"The picture now is this," said Wesley Mouch. "The economic  
condition of the country was better the year before last than it was  
last year, and last year it was better than it is at present. It's obvious  
that we would not be able to survive another year of the same  
progression. Therefore, our sole objective must now be to hold the  
line. To stand still in order to catch our stride. To achieve total sta-  
bility. Freedom has been given a chance and has failed. Therefore,  
more stringent controls are necessary. Since men are unable and  
unwilling to solve their problems voluntarily, they must be forced to  
do it." He paused, picked up the sheet of paper, then added in a  
less formal tone of voice, "Hell, what it comes down to is that we  
can manage to exist as and where we are, but we can't afford to  
move! So we've got to stand still. We've got to stand still. We've got  
to make those bastards stand still!"

His head drawn into his shoulders, he was looking at them with  
the anger of a man declaring that the country's troubles were a per-  
sonal affront to him. So many men seeking favors had been afraid  
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of him.

Wesley Mouch had a long, square face and a flat topped skull,  
made more so by a brush haircut. His lower lip was a petulant bulb  
and the pale, brownish pupils of his eyes looked like the yolks of  
eggs smeared under the not fully translucent whites. His facial  
muscles moved abruptly, and the movement vanished, having con-  
veyed no expression. No one had ever seen him smile.

Wesley Mouch came from a family that had known neither pov-  
erty nor wealth nor distinction for many generations, it had clung  
however, to a . . . its own . . . that of being college bred.

therefore of despising men who were in business. The family's diplomas had always hung on the wall in the manner of a reproach to the world because the diplomas had not automatically produced the material equivalents of their attested spiritual value. Among the family's numerous relatives, there was one rich uncle. He had married his money and in his widowed old age, he had picked Wesley as his favorite from among his many nephews and nieces because Wesley was the least distinguished of the lot and therefore thought Uncle Julius the safest. Uncle Julius did not care for people who were brilliant. He did not care for the trouble of managing his money either so he turned the job over to Wesley. By the time Wesley graduated from college there was no money to manage. Uncle Julius blamed it on Wesley's cunning and cried that Wesley was an unscrupulous schemer. But there had been no scheme about it. Wesley could not have said just where the money had gone. In high school Wesley Mouch had been one of the worst students and had passionately envied those who were the best. College taught him that he did not have to envy them at all. After graduation, he took a job in the advertising department of a company that manufactured a bogus corn-cure. The cure sold well and he rose to be the head of his department. He left it to take charge of the advertising of a hair restorer then of a patented brassiere then of a new soap then of a soft drink—and then he became advertising vice president of an automobile concern. He tried to sell automobiles as if they were a bogus corn-cure. They did not sell. He blamed it on the insufficiency of his advertising budget. It was the president of the automobile concern who recommended him to Rearden. It was Rearden who introduced him in Washington—Rearden who knew no standard by which to judge the activities of his Washington man. It was James Taggart who gave him a start in the Bureau of Economic

double-crossing  
e for destroying  
sley Mouch to  
advantage for the same reason as that which had prompted Uncle Julius—they were people who believed that mediocrity was safe. The men who now sat in front of his desk had been taught that the law of causality was a superstition and that one had to deal with the situation of the moment without considering its cause. By the situation of the moment they had—Wesley Mouch  
we  
to  
th  
at the meeting point of forces unleashed in destruction against one another

"This is just a rough draft of Directive Number 10-289" said Wesley Mouch "which Gene Clem and I have dashed off just to give you the general idea. We want to hear your opinions suggestions and so forth—you being the representatives of labor industry transportation and the professions."

Fred Kinnan got off the window sill and sat down on the arm of chair. Orren Boyle spit out the butt of his cigar. James Taggart

but nor leave nor retire, nor close, sell or transfer their business under penalty of the nationalization of their establishment and of any and all of their property

"Point Three All patents and copyrights, pertaining to any devices, inventions, formulas, processes and works of any nature whatsoever"

penalty  
he or  
and

manufacturers under the same name, such name to be selected by the Unification Board All private trademarks and brand names are hereby abolished.

"Point Four No new devices, inventions, products, or goods of any nature whatsoever, not now on the market, shall be produced, invented manufactured or sold after the date of this directive The Office of Patents and Copyrights is hereby suspended

"Point Five Every establishment, concern, corporation or person engaged in production of any nature whatsoever shall henceforth produce the same amount of goods per year as it, they or he produced during the Basic Year, no more and no less The year to be known as the Basic or Yardstick Year is to be the year ending on the date of this directive Over or under production shall be fined such fines to be determined by the Unification Board

"Point Six Every person of any age, sex, class or income, shall henceforth spend the same amount of money on the purchase of goods per year as he or she spent during the Basic Year, no more and no less Over or under purchasing shall be fined such fines to be determined by the Unification Board

"Point Seven All wages, prices, salaries, dividends, profits, interest

est rates and fo  
frozen at their f  
Point Eight  
vided for in the

Unification Board whose decisions will be made

There was even within the four men who had listened a remnant of human dignity which made them sit still and feel sick for the length of one minute

James Taggart spoke first His voice was low but it had the trembling intensity of an involuntary scream "Well, why not? Why should they have it if we don't? Why should they stand above us? If we are to perish let's make sure that we all perish together Let's make sure that we leave them no chance to survive!"

That's a damn funny thing to say about a very practical plan that will benefit everybody said Orren Boyle shrilly looking at Taggart in frightened astonishment

Dr Ferris chuckled

Taggart's eyes seemed to focus and he said his voice louder "Yes of course It's a very practical plan It's necessary practical and just It will solve everybody's problems It will give everybody a chance to feel safe A chance to rest.

It will give security to the people" said Eugene Lawson his mouth slithering into a smile Security—that's what the people want If they want it why shouldn't they have it? Just because a handful of rich will object?

"It's not the rich who'll object said Dr Ferris lazily "The rich drool for security more than any other sort of animal—haven't you discovered that yet?"

"Well, who'll object? snapped Lawson

Dr Ferris smiled pointedly and did not answer

Lawson looked away "To hell with them! Why should we worry about them? We've got to run the world for the sake of the little people It's intelligence that's caused all the troubles of humanity Man's mind is the root of all evil This is the day of the heart. It's the weak the meek the sick and the humble that must be the only objects of our concern His lower lip was twisting in soft, lecherous motions "Those who're big are here to serve those who aren't If they refuse to do their moral duty, we've got to force them There once was an Age of Reason, but we've progressed beyond it. This is the Age of Love

"Shut up!" screamed James Taggart.

They all stared at him "For Christ's sake Jim what's the matter?" said Orren Boyle shaking

"Nothing," said Taggart "nothing . . . Wesley keep him still, will you?"

Mouch said uncomfortably "But I fail to see—"

Just keep him still We don't have to listen to him do we?"

"Why no but—"

"Then let's go on"

"What is this?" demanded Lawson "I resent it I most emphatically—" But he saw no support in the faces around him and stopped.

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ned in all their minds "There's no such thing as the intellect. A man's brain is a social product. A sum of influences that he's picked from those around him. Nobody invents anything, he merely reflects what's floating in the social atmosphere. A genius is an intellectual scavenger and a greedy boarder of the ideas which

unplutter

"All I've got to say is that you'd better staff that Unification Board with my men," he said. "Better make sure of it, brother—or I'll blast your Point One to hell."

"I intend, of course, to have a representative of labor on that Board,"

tative of industry,

"Just representa-

"What the hell?" yelled Orren Boyle. "That's stacking the cards, isn't it?"

"Sure," said Fred Kinnan.

"But that will give you a stranglehold on every business in the country!"

"What do you think I'm after?"

"That's unfair!" yelled Boyle. "I won't stand for it! You have no right! You—"

"Right?" said Kinnan innocently. "Are we talking about rights?"

"But, I mean, after all, there are certain fundamental property rights which—"

"Listen, pal, you want Point Three, don't you?"

"Well, I—"

"Then you'd better keep your trap shut about property rights from now on. Keep it shut tight!"

"Mr. Kinnan," said Dr. Ferris, "you must not make the old-fashioned— Our policy has been to be—"

"S—"

"I know"

"I'm t—"



"I object" said Boyle, "to your dictatorial method of—"

Kinnan turned his back on him and said, "Listen, Wesley, boys won't like Point One. If I get to run things, I'll make them swallow it. If not, not. Just make up your mind."

"Well—" said Mouch, and stopped.

"For Christ's sake, Wesley, what about us?" yelled Taggart.

"You'll come to me," said Kinnan, "when you'll need a deal to fix the Board. But I'll run that Board. Me and Wesley."

"Do you think the country will stand for it?" yelled Taggart.

"Stop kidding yourself," said Kinnan. "The country? If there aren't any principles any more—and I guess the doc is right, because there sure aren't—if there aren't any rules to this game and it's only a question of who robs whom—then I've got more votes than the bunch of you. There are more workers than employers, and doc, you forget it, boys!"

"That's a funny attitude to take," said Taggart haughtily, "about a measure which, after all, is not designed for the selfish benefit of workers or employers, but for the general welfare of the public."

"Okay," said Kinnan amiably, "let's talk your lingo. Who is the public? If you go by quality—then it ain't you, Jim, and it ain't Orrie Boyle. If you go by quantity—then it sure is me, because quantity is what I've got behind me." His smile disappeared, and with a sudden, bitter look of weariness he added, "Only I'm not going to say that I'm working for the welfare of my public, because I know I'm not. I know that I'm delivering the poor bastards into slavery, and that's all there is to it. And they know it, too. But they know that I'll have to throw them a crumb once in a while, if I want to keep my racket, while with the rest of you they would have a chance in hell. So that's why, if they've got to be under the whip, they'd rather I held it, not you—you drooling, tear-jerking, measly-mouthed bastards of the public welfare! Do you think it's outside of your college-bred panties there's one village idiot who's fooling? I'm a racketeer—but I know it and my boys know it and they know that I'll pay off. Not out of the kindness of my heart either, and not a cent more than I can get away with, but at least they can count on that much. Sure, it makes me sick sometimes. It makes me sick right now, but it's not me who's built this kind of world—you did—so I'm playing the game as you've set it up and I'm going to play it for as long as it lasts—which isn't going to be long for any of us!"

He stood up. No one answered him. He let his eyes move slowly from face to face and stop on Wesley Mouch.

"Do I get the Board, Wesley?" he asked casually.

"The selection of the specific personnel is only a technical detail," said Mouch pleasantly. "Suppose we discuss it later, you and I?"

Everybody in the room knew that this meant the answer "Yes."

"Okay, pal," said Kinnan. He went back to the window, sat down on the sill and lighted a cigarette.

For some unadmitted reason, the others were looking at Dr. Felt as if seeking guidance.

Don't be disturbed by oratory," said Dr Ferris smoothly "Mr  
practical reality He

part spoke up sud  
ave to hold things  
Everything will have to remain as it is Just as it is Nobody  
be permitted to change anything Except—" He turned sharply  
Wesley Mouch "Wesley, under Point Four, we'll have to close  
scientific foun  
They'll have

es that's right, said Mouch. I hadn't thought of that. We'll  
to stick in a couple of lines about that." He hunted around for  
encil and made a few scrawls on the margin of his paper

es said Orren Boyle "Nobody should be allowed to waste  
ney on the new until everybody has plenty of the old Close all  
the damn research laboratories—and the sooner the better "  
"Yes" said Wesley Mouch "We'll close them All of them "  
"The State Science Institute too?" asked Fred Kinnan  
"Oh, no!" said Mouch. "That's different. That's government Be  
to take

d such,  
"What  
they going to do for a living, with all the other jobs and busi  
ness frozen?"

"Oh" said Wesley Mouch He scratched his head He turned to  
Mr Weatherby "Do we put them on relief Clem?"

"No" said Mr Weatherby "What for? There's not enough of  
them to raise a squawk Not enough to matter "

"I suppose" said Mouch, turning to Dr Ferris "that you'll be  
able to absorb some of them, Floyd?"

"Some," said Dr Ferris slowly as if relishing every syllable of  
his answer "Those who prove co-operative "

"What about the rest?" said Fred Kinnan.

"They'll have to wait till the Unification Board finds some use for  
them," said Wesley Mouch

"What will they eat while they're waiting?"

Mouch shrugged "There's got to be some victims in times of  
national emergency It can't be helped "

"We have the right to do it!" cried Taggart suddenly in defiance  
of the stillness of the room "We need it We need it, don't we?"

There was no answer "We have the right to protect our livelihood!"  
Nobody opposed him, but he went on with a shrill, pleading insis-

stance. "We'll be safe for the first time in centuries Everybody will

know his place and job, and everybody else's place and job—and we won't be at the mercy of every stray crank with a new idea. Nobody will push us out of business or steal our markets or undersell us or make us obsolete. Nobody will come to us offering some damn new gadget and putting us on the spot to decide whether we'll lose our shirt if we buy it, or whether we'll lose our shirt if we don't buy it. Somebody else does! We won't have to decide. Nobody will be permitted to decide anything. It will be decided once and for all. His glance moved pleadingly from face to face. "There's been enough invented already—enough for everybody's comfort—why should they be allowed to go on inventing? Why should we permit them to blast the ground from under our feet every few steps? Why should we be kept on the go in eternal uncertainty? Just because of a few restless, ambitious adventurers? Should we sacrifice the contentment of the whole of mankind to the greed of a few non-conformists? We don't need them. We don't need them at all. I wish we'd get rid of that hero worship! Heroes? They've done nothing but harm, all through history. They've kept mankind running a wild race, with no breathing spell, no rest, no ease, no security. Running to catch up with them . . . always, without end. Just as we catch up, they're years ahead . . . They leave us no chance. . . . They've never left us a chance. . . ." His eyes were moving restlessly, he glanced at the window, but looked hastily away. He did not want to see the white obelisk in the distance. "We're through with them. We've won. This is our age. Our world. We're going to have security—for the first time in centuries—for the first time since the beginning of the industrial revolution!"

"Well, this, I guess," said Fred Kinnam, "is the anti industrial revolution."

"That's a damn funny thing for you to say!" snapped Wesley Mouch. "We can't be permitted to say that to the public."

"Don't worry, brother. I won't say it to the public."

"It's a total fallacy," said Dr. Ferns. "It's a statement prompted by ignorance. Every expert has conceded long ago that a planned economy achieves the maximum of productive efficiency and that centralization leads to super-industrialization."

"Centralization destroys the blight of monopoly," said Boyle.

"How's that again?" drawled Kinnam.

" . . . . . answered earnestly

Tatizabo

Now, it

shortas

of iron ore, ■ there any sense in my wasting money, labor and national resources on making old fashioned steel, when there exists a much better metal that I could be making? A metal that everybody wants, but nobody can get. Now is that good economics or sound social efficiency or democratic justice? Why shouldn't I be allowed to manufacture that metal and why shouldn't the people have it when they need it? Just because of the private monopoly of a selfish individual? Should we sacrifice our rights to his person

"Skip it, brother," said Fred Kinnan. "I've read it all in the same newspapers you did."

"I don't like your attitude," said Boyle, in a sudden tone of righteousness, with a look which, in a barroom, would have signified a relapse to a fist fight. He sat up straight, buttressed by the columns of paragraphs on yellow-tinged paper, which he was seeing in his mind.

"At a time of crucial public need, are we to waste social effort on the manufacture of obsolete products? Are we to let the many remain in want while the few withhold from us the better products and methods available? Are we to be stopped by the superstition of patent rights?"

"Is it not obvious that private industry is unable to cope with the present economic crisis? How long, for instance, are we going to put up with the disgraceful shortage of Rearden Metal? There is a crying public demand for it, which Rearden has failed to supply."

"When are we going to put an end to economic injustice and special privileges? Why should Rearden be the only one permitted to manufacture Rearden Metal?"

"I don't like your attitude," said Orren Boyle. "So long as we respect the rights of the workers, we'll want you to respect the rights of the industrialists."

"Which rights of which industrialists?" drawled Kinnan.

"I'm inclined to think," said Dr. Ferris hastily, "that Point Two, perhaps, is the most essential one of all at present. We must put an end to that peculiar business of industrialists retiring and vanishing. We must stop them. It's playing havoc with our entire economy."

"Why are they doing it?" asked Taggart nervously. "Where are they all going?"

"Nobody knows," said Dr. Ferris. "We've been unable to find any information or explanation. But it must be stopped. In times of crisis, economic service to the nation is just as much of a duty as military service. Anyone who abandons it should be regarded as a deserter. I have recommended that we introduce the death penalty for those men, but Wesley wouldn't agree to it."

"Take it easy, boy," said Fred Kinnan in an odd, slow voice. He sat suddenly and perfectly still, his arms crossed, looking at Ferris in a manner that made it suddenly real to the room that Ferris had proposed murder. "Don't let me hear you talk about any death penalty."

"We don't side. Our problem is, will they will they accept it at all?"

"They will," said Dr. Ferris.

"I'm a little worried," said Dr. Ferris. "Take it Point Three and Fe industry. That's."

spiritual issue. Doesn't Point Four mean that no new books are to be written or published from now on?"

"Yes," said Mouch, "it does. But we can't make an exception for the book publishing business. It's an industry like any other. What we say 'no new products,' it's got to mean 'no new products.'"

"But this is a matter of the spirit," said Lawson, his voice had a tone, not of rational respect, but of superstitious awe.

"We're not interfering with anybody's spirit. But when you put a book on paper, it becomes a material commodity—and if we

"Don't be a chump, Gene," said Dr. Ferris. "You don't want some recalcitrant hacks to come out with treatises that will wreck our entire program, do you? If you breathe the word 'censorship' now they'll all scream bloody murder. They're not ready for it—as yet. But if you leave the spirit alone and make it a simple material matter—not a matter of ideas, but just a matter of paper, ink and printing presses—you accomplish your purpose much more smoothly. You make sure that nothing dangerous gets printed or heard—and no body is going to fight over a material issue."

"Yes, but . . . but I don't think the writers will like it." "Are you sure?" asked Wesley Mouch, with a glance that was almost a smile. "Don't forget that under Point Five the publishers will have to publish as many books as they did in the Basic Year. Since there will be no new ones, they will have to reprint—and the public will have to buy—some of the old ones. There are many very worthy books that have never had a fair chance."

"Oh," said Lawson, he remembered that he had seen Mouch lunching with Ralph Eubank two weeks ago. Then he shook his head and frowned. "Still, I'm worried. The intellectuals are our friends. We don't want to lose them. They can make an awful lot of trouble."

"They won't," said Fred Kinnan. "Your kind of intellectuals are the first to scream when it's safe—and the first to shut their traps at the first sign of danger. They spend years spitting at the man who feeds them—and they lick the hand of the man who slaps their drooling faces. Didn't they deliver every country of Europe, one after another to the Germans? Didn't they deliver France here? Didn't

the slave camps, the fourteen hour workday and the mortality from scurvy in the People's States of Europe? No, but you do hear them telling the whip-beaten wretches that starvation is prosperity, that slavery is freedom, that torture chambers are brother love and that if the wretches don't understand it, then it's their own fault that they suffer, and it's the mangled corpses in the jail cellars who're to blame for all their troubles, not the benevolent leaders! Intellectuals might have to worry about any other breed of men, but not

about the modern intellectuals they'll swallow anything I don't  
I so safe about the loudest wharf rat in the longshoremen's  
union he's liable to remember suddenly that he is a man—and then  
won't be able to keep him in line. But the intellectuals? That's the  
one thing they've forgotten long ago. I guess it's the one thing that  
their education was aimed to make them forget. Do anything  
unpleasant to the intellectuals. They'll take it."

"For once," said Dr. Ferris, "I agree with Mr. Kinnan. I agree  
with his facts if not with his feelings. You don't have to worry  
about the intellectuals, Wesley. Just put a few of them on the gov-  
ernment payroll and send them out to preach precisely the sort of  
thing Mr. Kinnan mentioned—that the blame rests on the victims.  
Give them moderately comfortable salaries and extremely loud  
titles—and they'll forget their copyrights and do a better job for  
us than you do."

... actually have  
... of clauses in  
... most, but not  
... would have a  
very good chance to beat us. And we have to preserve a semblance  
of legality—or the populace won't take it."

"Precisely," said Dr. Ferris. "It's extremely important to get those  
patents turned over to us *voluntarily*. Even if we had a law per-

about its being a patriotic duty and that anyone who refuses is a  
prince of greed and they'll sign. But—" He stopped.

"I know," said Mouch. He was growing visibly more nervous.  
"There will be, I think, a few old-fashioned bastards here and there  
who'll refuse to sign—but they won't be prominent enough to make  
a noise. Nobody will hear about it, their own communities and  
friends will turn against them for their being selfish, so it won't give  
us any trouble. We'll just take the patents over, anyway—and those  
guys won't have the nerve or the money to start a test case. But—"

He stopped.  
James Taggart leaned back in his chair, watching them, he was  
beginning to enjoy the conversation.

things which must not be said—and he is not afraid to say them. He knows the one dangerous, fatally dangerous weapon. He is our deadliest adversary.

Who? asked Lawson.

Dr Ferris hesitated, shrugged and answered "The guiltless man."

Lawson stared blankly. What do you mean and whom are you talking about?

James Taggart smiled.

"I mean that there is no way to disarm any man," said Dr Ferris, except through guilt. Through that which he himself has accepted as guilt. If a man has ever stolen a dime you can impose on him the punishment intended for a bank robber and he will take it. He'll bear any form of misery, he'll feel that he deserves no better. If there is not enough guilt in the world we must create it. If we teach a man that it is evil to look at spring flowers and he believes us and then does it—we will be able to do whatever we please with him. He won't defend himself. He won't feel he's worth it. He won't fight. But save us from the man who lives up to his own standards. Save us from the man of clean conscience. He's the man who'll beat us."

Are you talking about Henry Rearden? asked Taggart, his voice peculiarly clear.

The one name they had not wanted to pronounce struck them into an instant's silence.

What if I were? asked Dr Ferris cautiously.

Oh nothing, said Taggart. Only if you were I would tell you that I can deliver Henry Rearden. He'll sign."

By the rules of their unspoken language they all knew—from the tone of his voice—that he was not bluffing.

"God! I'm! No!" gasped Wesley Mouch.

"Yes," said Taggart. I was stunned too when I learned—what I learned. I didn't expect that. Anything but that."

I am glad to hear it, said Mouch cautiously. "It's a constructive piece of information. It might be very valuable indeed."

Valuable—yes, said Taggart pleasantly. "When do you plan to put the directive into effect?"

"Oh, we have to move fast. We don't want any news of it to leak out. I expect you all to keep this most strictly confidential! I'd say that we'll be ready to spring it on them in a couple of weeks."

"Don't you think it would be advisable—before all prices are frozen—to adjust the matter of the railroad rates? I was thinking of a raise. A small but most essentially needed raise."

"We'll discuss it, you and I," said Mouch amiably. "It might be arranged."

He turned to the others. "There's a meeting."

"There's a meeting," said Taggart.

"There's a meeting," said Mouch.

"There's a meeting," said Taggart.

"There's a meeting," said Mouch.

"Say," asked Kinnan, "how is the emergency to end if everything is to stand still?"

"Don't be theoretical," said Mouch impatiently. "We've got to deal with the situation of the moment. Don't bother about minor details so long as the broad outlines of our policy are clear. We'll have the power. We'll be able to solve any problem and answer any question."

Fred Kinnan chuckled. "Who is John Galt?"

"Don't say that!" cried Taggart.

"I have a question I ask about Point Seven," said Kinnan. "It is that all - one -

Mouch. "What about it?"

"Nothing," said Kinnan. "I just asked."

Mouch leaned back in his chair. "I must say to all of you that appreciate your coming here and giving us the benefit of your opinions. It has been very helpful." He leaned forward to look at a desk calendar and sat over it for a moment, toying with his pencil. Then the pencil came down, struck a date and drew a circle round it. "Directive 10 289 will go into effect on the morning of May first."

All nodded approval. None looked at his neighbor.

James Taggart rose, walked to the window and pulled the blind down over the white obelisk.

In the first - - - she remembered once that she had - - - when - - -

She - - - The lighted lamp on the desk looked futile in the glow of the morning over the piles of paper which were her cheerless unfinished task. She tried not to think of the work for a few minutes longer, while she dragged herself past the desk to her washroom and let handfuls of cold water run over her face.

The exhaustion was gone by the time she stepped back into the office. No matter what night preceded it, she had never known a morning when she - - - meant that he - - - can - - - her - - - ma - - - ar - - -



that would take form in the activity about to pour through them. The calendar in the distance said May 1.

She sat down at her desk, smiling in defiance at the distastefulness of her job. She hated the reports that she had to finish reading, but it was her job, it was her railroad, it was morning. She lighted a cigarette, thinking that she would finish this task before breakfast, she turned off the lamp and pulled the papers forward.

There were reports from the general managers of the four Regions of the Taggart system, their pages a typewritten cry of despair over

all those calculations had been made on the assumption that the volume of freight would remain unchanged and that the raise would bring them added revenue by the end of the year, she knew that the freight tonnage would go on shrinking, that the raise would make little difference that by the end of this year their losses would be greater than ever.

When she looked up from the pages, she saw with a small jolt of astonishment that the clock said 9 25. She had been dimly aware of the usual sound of movement and voices in the anteroom of her office, as her staff had arrived to begin their day; she wondered why nobody had entered her office and why her telephone had remained silent, as a daily rule, there should have been a rush of business by this hour. She glanced at her calendar, there was a note that the McNeil Car Foundry of Chicago was to phone her at nine A.M. in regard to the new freight cars which Taggart Transcontinental had

call her  
"Miss

"I slept here last night, again. Didn't intend to, but did. Was there a call for me from the McNeil Car Foundry?"

"No, Miss Taggart."

"Put them through to me immediately, when they call."

"Yes, Miss Taggart."

Switching the communicator off, she wondered whether she imagined it or whether there had been something strange in the girl's voice—it had sounded unnaturally tense.

She felt the faint light-headedness of hunger and thought that she

of malicious anger—that he had stopped work in the mountain section of Winston, Colorado. He recommended a change of plans—he suggested that the rail intended for Winston be used, in-

ad, to repair the track of their Washington to-Miami branch. He  
re his reasons a derailment had occurred on that branch last  
ek, and Mr Tinky Holloway of Washington, traveling with a  
ity of friends, had been delayed for three hours, it had been  
orted to the chief engineer that Mr Holloway had expressed

med a much more important class of passenger traffic, therefore,  
s chief engineer suggested that Winston could be kept waiting a  
ile longer and see how

yes, thinking that her first duty of the day, ahead of any other,  
is to stop this particular piece of insanity

The telephone rang

"Yes?" she asked, snatching the receiver "McNeil Car Foundry?"

"No," said the voice of her secretary "Señor Francisco d'An-

nia."  
She looked at the phone's mouthpiece for the instant of a brief  
look. "All right. Put him on"

The next voice she heard was Francisco's "I see that you're in  
our office just the same," he said, his voice was mocking, harsh and  
ins.

"Where did you expect me to be?"

"How do you like the new suspension?"

"What suspension?"

"The moratorium on brains"

"What are you talking about?"

"Haven't you seen today's newspapers?"

"No"

There was a pause then his voice came slowly changed and  
grave "Better take a look at them Dagny"

"All right."

"I'll call you later"

She hung up and pressed the switch of the communicator on her  
desk. "Get me a newspaper," she said to her secretary

"Yes Miss Taggart," the secretary's voice answered grunly

It was Eddie Willers who came in and put the newspaper down  
on her desk. The meaning of the look on his face was the same as  
the tone she had caught in Francisco's voice the advance notice of  
some inconceivable disaster

"None of us wanted to be first to tell you," he said very quietly  
and walked out.

When she rose from her desk, a few moments later she felt that  
she had full control of her head and that she was not aware of her  
body

she st

clant

around her, but she knew that she would be able to see the thread of a cobweb if her purpose required it, just as she would be able to walk with a somnambulist's assurance along the edge of a roof. She could not know that she was looking at the room with the eyes of a person who had lost the capacity and the concept of doubt, and what remained to her was the simplicity of a single perception and of a single goal. She did not know that the thing which seemed so violent, yet felt like such a still, unfamiliar calm within her, was the power of full certainty—and that the anger shaking her body, the anger which made her ready, with the same passionate indifference, either to kill or to die, was her love of rectitude, the only love to which all the years of her life had been given.

Holding the newspaper in her hand, she walked out of her office and on toward the hall. She knew, crossing the anteroom, that the faces of her staff were turned to her, but they seemed to be many years away.

She walked down the hall, moving swiftly but without effort with the same sensation of knowing that her feet were probably touching the ground but that she did not feel it. She did not know how many rooms she crossed to reach Jim's office, or whether there had been any people in her way—the janitor, the door man to take and the door to pull open to enter.

The newspaper  
him. She threw it  
the carpet.

"There's my resignation, Jim," she said. "I won't work as a slave or as a slave-driver."

She did not hear the sound of his gasp, it came with the sound of the door closing after her.

She went back to her office and, crossing the anteroom, signaled Eddie to follow her inside.

She said her voice calm and clear, "I have resigned."

He nodded silently.

"I don't know as yet what I'll do in the future. I'm going away, to think it over and to decide. If you want to follow me, I'll be at the lodge in Woodstock." It was an old hunting cabin in a forest of the Berkshire Mountains which she had inherited from her father and had not visited for years.

"I want to follow," he whispered, "I want to quit, and . . . and I can't. I can't make myself do it."

"Then will you do me a favor?"

"Of course."

"Don't communicate with me about the railroad. I don't want to hear it. Don't tell anyone where I am except Hank Rearden. If he asks, tell him about the cabin and how to get there. But no one else. I don't want to see anybody."

"All right."

"Promise?"

"Of course."

"When I decide what's to become of me, I'll let you know."

wait."

"That's all, Eddie."

He knew that every word was measured and that nothing else could be said between them at this moment. He inclined his head, letting it say the rest, then walked out of the office.

She saw the chief engineer's report still lying open on her desk, and thought that she had to order him at once to resume work on the Winston section, then remembered that it was not her problem any longer. She felt no pain. She knew that the pain would come later and that it would be a tearing agony of pain, and that the promise of the moment was a promise of pain.

Pennsylvania.

"I see." He sounded as if he had expected it.

"No I have two weeks in which they expect me to sign their Gift Certificate. I want to be right here when the two weeks expire."

"Do you need me—for the two weeks?"

"No. It's worse for you than for me. You have no way to fight them. I have. I think I'm glad they did it. It's clear and final. Don't worry about me. Rest. Rest from all of it, first."

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"To the country. To a cabin I own in the Berkshires. If you want to see me, Eddie Willers will tell you the way to get there. I'll be back in two weeks."

"Will you do me a favor?"

"Yes."

"Don't come back until I come for you."

"But I want to be here, when it happens."

"Leave that up to me."

"Whatever they do to you, I want it done to me also."

"Leave it up to me. Dearest, don't you understand? I think that what I want most right now is what you want: not to see any of them. But I have to stay here for a while. So I will help me if I know that you, at least, are out of their reach. I want to keep one clean point in my mind, to lean against. It will be only a short while—and then I'll be back."

the  
king  
her steps advancing with the unbroken, unhurried rhythm of

finality Her face was held level and it had a look of astonishment of acceptance, of repose

She walked across the concourse of the Terminal She saw the statue of Nathaniel Taggart But she felt no pain from it and no reproach, only the rising fullness of her love, only the feeling that she was going to join him, not in death, but in that which had been his life

\* \*

The first man to quit at Rearden Steel was Tom Colby, rolling mill foreman, head of the Rearden Steel Workers Union For ten years he had heard himself denounced throughout the country, because his was a "company union" and because he had never engaged in a violent conflict with the management This was true no conflict had ever been necessary, Rearden paid a higher wage scale than any union scale in the country, for which he demanded—and got—the best labor force to be found anywhere

When Tom Colby told him that he was quitting Rearden nodded, without comment or questions

"I won't work under these conditions, myself," Colby added quietly, "and I won't help to keep the men working They trust me. I won't be the Judas goat leading them to the stockyards"

"What are you going to do for a living?" asked Rearden.

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

Colby shrugged

Rearden thought of the boy with the angry eyes, who mined coal at night as a criminal He thought of all the dark roads, the alleys, the back yards of the country where the best of the country's men would now exchange their services in jungle barter, in chance jobs, in unrecorded transactions He thought of the end of that road

Tom Colby seemed to know what he was thinking "You're on your way to end up right alongside of me, Mr Rearden," he said. "Are you going to sign your brains over to them?"

"No"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

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"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

"And after that?"

"I've saved enough to last me for about a year"

eyes in a  
I've been  
n But it  
"

if sensing  
d to  
him  
duo-  
the  
ness

the boy's face

Rearden " he said

"I wanted to tell you that if you want to

ten times the quota of Rearden Metal or steel or pig iron or

"

"

thing, and bootleg it all over the place to anybody at any  
e—I wanted to tell you to go ahead I'll fix it up I'll juggle the  
ks, I'll fake the reports, I'll get phony witnesses, I'll forge affi-  
its, I'll commit perjury—so you don't have to worry, there  
it be any trouble!"

Now why do you want to do that?" asked Rearden, smiling, but  
smile vanished when he heard the boy answer earnestly

Because I want, for once, to do something moral "

That's not the way ~~to~~ be moral—" Rearden started, and stopped  
uply, realizing that ~~it~~ was the way, the only way left, realizing  
ough how many twists of intellectual corruption upon corruption  
boy had to struggle toward his momentous discovery

"I know it's  
! I meant—" "Mr Rearden,

"Take Rearden Metal away from you "

Rearden smiled and, prompted by a desperate pity, said "Forget  
Non Absolute. There are no rights "

"I know there aren't. But I mean . . . what I mean is that they  
at do it "

"Why not?" He could not help smiling

"Mr Rearden, don't sign the Gift Certificate! Don't sign it, on  
inciple "

"I won't sign it. But there aren't any principles "

"I know there aren't " He was reciting it in full earnestness, with "  
e honesty of a conscientious student "I know that everything is  
lative and that nobody can know anything and that reason is an  
usion and that there isn't any reality But I'm just talking about  
arden Metal Don't sign, Mr Rearden Morals or no morals,  
inciples or no principles, just don't sign it—because it isn't right!"

No one else mentioned the directive in Rearden's presence Silence  
as the new aspect about the mills The men did not speak to him  
hen he appeared in the workshops, and he noticed that they did  
ot speak to one another The personnel office received no formal  
signations But every other morning one or two men failed to  
ppear and never appeared again Inquiries at their homes found  
e homes abandoned and the men gone The personnel office did  
ot report these desertions, as the directive required, instead, Rear-  
en began to see unfamiliar faces among the workers, the drawn,  
eaten faces of the long-unemployed, and heard them addressed by  
he names of the men who had quit He asked no questions

There was silence throughout the country He did not know how  
many had . . . and vanished on May 1 and 2, leav-

own custom-  
Chicago He  
eared in the  
suddenly full

it stories about spring floods, traffic accidents, ~~shows~~ picnics  
golden wedding

There was silence in his own home. Lillian had departed on a vacation trip to Florida in mid April. It had astonished him, as an inexplicable whim, it was the first trip she had taken alone since their marriage. Philip avoided him, with a look of panic. His mother stared at Rearden in reproachful bewilderment, she said nothing but she kept bursting into tears in his presence, her manner suggesting that her tears were the most important aspect to consider whatever disaster it was that she sensed approaching.

On the morning of May 15 he sat at the desk in his office, alone.

valour and the first on scale of importance

spite of its rigid formality her tone conveyed the question -  
I throw him out?

Rearden's face  
at pa  
"I"  
ask  
that  
the obvious  
invitation  
acted as  
office h

Rearden sat watching him in patient silence.

"Since the deadline for the signing of the national Gift Certificate expires tonight at midnight," said Dr Ferris in the tone of a salesman extending a special courtesy to a customer, "I have come to obtain your signature Mr Rearden."

He paused with an air of suggesting that the formula now called for an answer.

"Go on," said Rearden. "I am listening."

"Yes I suppose I should explain," said Dr Ferris "that we want to get your signature early in the day in order to announce the program on a national news broadcast. Although the gift program has gone through quite smoothly there are still a few stubborn individuals left who have failed to sign—small fry, really, whose patents are of no crucial value but we cannot let them remain unbound, a matter of principle you understand. They are we believe waiting to follow your lead. You have a great popular following Mr Rearden much greater than you suspected or knew how to use. Therefore the announcement that you have signed will remove the hopes of resistance and by midnight, will bring in the rest, thus completing the program on schedule."

Rearden knew that of all possible speeches this was the last

Ferris would make if any doubt of his surrender remained in the man's mind

"Go on," said Rearden evenly "You haven't finished."

"You know—as you have demonstrated at your trial—how important it is, and why, that we obtain all that property with the voluntary consent of the victims" Dr. Ferris opened his briefcase "Here is the Gift Certificate, Mr Rearden. We have filled it out and all you have to do is to sign your name at the bottom"

The piece of paper, which he placed in front of Rearden, looked like a small college diploma, with the text printed in old fashioned script and the particulars inserted by typewriter The thing stated that he, Henry Rearden, hereby transferred to the nation all rights to the metal alloy now known as "Rearden Metal, which would henceforth be manufactured by all who so desired, and which would bear the name of "Miracle Metal," chosen by the representatives of the people Glancing at the paper, Rearden wondered whether it was a deliberate mockery of decency, or so low an estimate of their victims' intelligence, that had made the designers of this paper print the text across a faint drawing of the Statue of Liberty

His eyes moved slowly to Dr Ferris' face "You would not have come here," he said, "unless you had some extraordinary kind of

understand

"He opened

ave brought a

few samples."

In the manner of a cardsharp whisking out a long fan of cards with one snap of the hand, he spread before Rearden a line of glossy photographic prints They were photostats of hotel and auto court registers, bearing in Rearden's handwriting the names of Mr and Mrs J Smith.

"You know, of course," said Dr Ferris softly, "but you might wish to see whether we know it, that Mrs J Smith is Miss Dagny Taggart"

ruby pendant "You wouldn't care to see the sworn stateless apartment house doormen and night clerks—they contain nothing that would be new to you, except the number of witnesses who know where you spent your nights in New York for about the last two

rand

ned

at



"I know it," said Rearden, his voice conveyed no reaction. The trip  
of personal  
telling you  
frankly that this will not hurt you at all. It will only hurt Miss  
Taggart."

Rearden was looking straight at him now, but Dr Ferris wondered  
why it seemed to him that the calm, closed face was moving away  
into a greater and greater distance.

"If this affair of yours is spread from one end of the country to  
the other," said Dr Ferris, "by such experts in the art of smearing  
as Bertram Scudder, it will do no actual damage to your reputation.  
Beyond a few glances of curiosity and a few raised eyebrows in a  
few of the stuffier drawing rooms, you will get off quite easily. Affairs  
of this sort are expected of a man. In fact, it will enhance your  
reputation. It will give you an aura of romantic glamor among the  
women and among the men it will give you a certain kind of  
prestige in the nature of envy for an unusual conquest. But what  
it will do to Miss Taggart—with her spotless name, her reputation  
for being above scandal, her peculiar position of a woman in  
strictly masculine business—what it will do to her, what she will see  
in the eyes of everyone she meets, what she will hear from every  
man she deals with—I will leave that up to your own mind to  
imagine. And to consider."

Rearden felt nothing but a great stillness and a great clarity.  
It was as if some voice were telling him sternly: "This is the time—  
the scene is lighted—now look. And standing naked in the great  
light, he was looking quietly, solemnly, stripped of fear, of pain, of  
hope, with nothing left to him but the desire to know."

Dr Ferris was astonished to hear him say slowly, in the dispa-  
sonate tone of an abstract statement that did not seem to be ad-  
dressed to his listener: "But all your calculations rest on the fact  
that Miss Taggart is a virtuous woman, not the slut you're going to  
call her."

"Yes, of course," said Dr Ferris.

"And that this means much more to me than a casual affair."

"Of course."

"If she and I were the kind of scum you're going to make us ap-  
pear, your blackjack wouldn't work."

"No, it wouldn't."

"If our relationship were the depravity you're going to proclaim  
it to be, you'd have no way to harm us."

"No."

"We'd be outside your power."

"Actually—yes."

It was not to Dr Ferris that Rearden was speaking. He was seeing  
a long line of men stretched through the centuries from Plato on-  
ward, whose heir and final product was an incompetent little pro-  
fessor with the appearance of a gargoyle and the soul of a thug.

"I offered you once a chance to join us," said Dr Ferris, "y-

sed. Now you can see the consequences. How a man of your  
ligence thought that he could win by playing it straight, I can't  
gine."

But if I had joined you," said Rearden, with the same detach-  
it, as if he were not speaking about himself, "what would I have  
all worth looting from Orren Boyle?"

Oh hell, there's always enough suckers to expropriate in the  
id!"

"I am not a sucker," said Rearden. "I am a man of  
ligence."

ening any longer. He was seeing the pendulous face of Orren  
yle with the small slits of pigs' eyes, the doughy face of Mr  
wen with the eyes that scurried away from any speaker and any  
it—he was seeing them go through the jerky motions of an ape  
rforming a routine it had learned to copy by muscular habit,  
rforming it in order to manufacture Rearden Metal, with no  
nowledge and no capacity to know what had taken place in the  
permental laboratory of Rearden Steel through ten years of  
usionate devotion to an excruciating effort. It was proper that  
ey should now call it "Miracle Metal—a miracle was the only  
me they could give to those ten years and to that faculty from  
hich Rearden Metal was born—a miracle was all that the Metal  
ould be in their eyes, the product of an unknown, unknowable  
use, an object in nature, not to be explained but to be seized, like  
stone or a weed, theirs for the seizing—are we to let the many  
remain in want while the few withhold from us the better products  
all methods available?"

If I had not known that my life depends on my mind and my  
effort—he was saying soundlessly to the line of men stretched  
through the centuries—if I had not made it my highest moral  
purpose to exercise the best of my effort and the fullest capacity  
of my mind in order to support and expand my life you would have  
found nothing to loot from me, nothing to support your own exist-  
ence. It is not my sins that you're using to injure me, but my virtues  
—my virtues by your own acknowledgment, since your own life de-  
pends on them, since you need them, since you do not seek to  
destroy my achievement but to seize it.

He remembered the voice of the gigolo of science saying to him  
"We're after power and we mean it. You fellows were pikers but  
we know the real trick." We were not after power—he said to the  
gigolo's ancestors in spirit—and we did not live by means of that  
which we condemned. We regarded productive ability as virtue—  
and we let the degree of his virtue be the measure of a man's  
reward. We drew no advantage from the things we regarded as  
evil—we did not require the existence of bank robbers in order to  
operate our banks or of burglars in order to provide for our homes,  
or of murderers in order to protect our lives. But you need the  
products of a man's ability—yet you proclaim that productive  
is a selfish evil and you turn the degree of a man's pr

into the measure of his loss. We lived by that which we held to be good and punished that which we held to be evil. You live by that which you denounce as evil and punish that which you know to be good.

He remembered the formula of the punishment that Lillian had sought  
monstrous  
a system  
was the punishment  
fuel to make  
as the cause of  
their feeling that

blackmail from which the depraved would be immune—men—  
People's States of Europe, millions of men being held in bondage by means of their desire to live, by means of their energy drained in forced labor, by means of their ability to feed their masters, by means of the hostage system, of their love for their children or wives or friends—by means of love, ability and pleasure as the fodder for threats and the bait for extortion, with love tied to fear, ability to punishment, ambition to confiscation with blackmail as law, with escape from pain, not quest for pleasure, as the only incentive to effort and the only reward of achievement—men held enslaved by means of whatever living power they possessed and of whatever joy they found in life. Such was the code that the world

became the agents of its destruction, so that one's best became the tool of one's agony, and man's life on earth became impractical.

"Yours was the code of life," said the voice of a man whom he could not forget. "What, then, is theirs?"

Why had the world accepted it?—he thought. How had the victim come to sanction a code that pronounced them guilty of the fact of existing? . . . And then the violence of an inner blow became the total stillness of his body as he sat looking at a sudden vision. Hadn't he done it also? Hadn't he given his sanction to the code of self-damnation? Dagny—he thought—and the depth of their feeling for each other . . . the blackmail from which the depraved would be immune . . . hadn't he, too, once called it depravity? Hadn't he been first to throw at her all the insults which the human scum was now threatening to throw at her in public? Hadn't he accepted the guilt the highest happiness he had ever found?

"You who won't allow one per cent of impurity into an alloy of metal," the unforgotten voice was saying to him, "what have you allowed into your moral code?"

"Well, Mr. Rearden?" said the voice of Dr. Ferris. "Do you understand me now? Do we get the Metal or do we make a public showplace out of Miss Taggart's bedroom?"

He was not seeing Dr. Ferris. He was seeing—in the violent glare that was like a spotlight tearing every riddle open to him—

he met Dagny for the first time

It was a few months after she had become Vice President of Taggart Transcontinental. He had been hearing skeptically, for some time, the rumors that the railroad was run by Jim Taggart's sister.

He telephoned her

at that same

time

and would be at

the construction site of the new cutoff, that afternoon at Milford Station between New York and Philadelphia, but would be glad to see him there if he wished. He went to the appointment resentfully, for he did not like such businesswomen as he had met, and he felt that railroads were no business for a woman to play with. He expected a spoiled heiress who used her name and sex as substitute for ability, like the lady

on the platform of

the station. There was a clutter of sidings, freight cars, cranes and steam shovels around him descending from the main track down the slope of a ravine where men were grading the roadbed of the new cutoff. Between the sidings toward the

on a flatcar

strands of dis

ordered hair stirring in the wind. Her plain gray suit was like a thin coating of metal over a slender body against the spread of sun-flooded space and sky. Her posture had the lightness and unself-conscious precision of an arrogantly pure self-confidence. She was watching the work, her glance intent and purposeful, the glance of competence enjoying its own function. She looked as if this were her place, her moment and her world; she looked as if enjoyment were hers.

of an active

mouth she

was ready to

He asked himself a moment earlier whether he carried in his mind an image of what he wanted a woman to look like. He would have answered that he did not yet; seeing her, he knew that this was the image and that it had been for years. But he was not looking at her as at a woman. He had forgotten where he was and on what errand; he was held by a child's sensation of joy in the immediate

and he was

me upon a

for its own

would have

the sheer

looked at a statue or a landscape and what the pleasure of the sight, the purest esthetic pleasure he had ever experienced.

He saw a switchman going by and he asked, pointing, "Who that?"

"Dagny Taggart," said the man, walking on.

Rearden felt as if the words struck him inside his throat. He felt the start of a current that cut his breath for a moment, then went slowly down his body, carrying in its wake a sense of weight, drained heaviness that left him no capacity but one. He was aware with an abnormal clarity—of the place, the woman's name, and everything it implied—but all of it had receded into some outer ring and had become a pressure that left him alone in the center as the rings meaning and essence—and his only reality was the desire to have this woman, now, here, on top of the flatcar in the open sun—to have her before a word was spoken between them, the first act of their meeting because it would say everything as because they had earned it long ago.

She turned her head. In the slow curve of the movement, her eyes came to his and stopped. He felt certain that she saw the nature of his glance that she was held by it yet did not name it to herself.

that which no man may feel fully and survive—a sense of self hatred—the more terrible because some part of him refused to accept and made him feel guiltier. It was not a progression of words but the instantaneous verdict of an emotion, a verdict that told him

He did not know how long he stood there or what that span of time left within him. All that he could preserve was the will to decide that she must never know it.

He waited until she had descended to the ground and the music with the notes had departed then he approached her and said coldly:

"Miss Taggart? I am Henry Rearden."

"Oh!" It was just a small break, then he heard the quietly natural "How do you do, Mr. Rearden?"

He knew, not admitting it to himself, that the break came from some faint equivalent of his own feeling—she was glad that a face she had liked belonged to a man she could admire. When he proceeded to speak to her about business, his manner was more harshly abrupt than it had ever been with any of his masculine customers.

Now, looking from the memory of the girl on the flatcar to the Gift Certificate lying on his desk, he felt as if the two met in a single shock, fusing all the days and doubts he had lived between them, and, by the glare of the explosion, in a moment's vision of final sum, he saw the answer to all his questions.

He thought: Guilty?—guiltier than I had known, far guiltier than

I had thought, that day—guilty of the evil of damning as guilt that which was my best. I damned the fact that my mind and body were one unit, and that my body responded to the values of my mind. I damned the fact that joy is the core of existence, the motive power of every living being, that it is the need of one's body as it is the goal of one's spirit, that my body was not a weight of inanimate muscles, but an instrument able to give me an experience of superlative joy to unite my flesh and my spirit. That capacity, which I damned as shameful, had left me indifferent to sluts, but gave me my one desire in answer to a woman's greatness. That desire, which I damned as obscene, did not come from the sight of her body, but from the knowledge that the lovely form I saw, did express the spirit I was seeing—it was not her body that I wanted, but her person—it was not the girl in gray that I had to possess, but the woman who ran a railroad.

But I damned my body's capacity to express what I felt, I damned, as an affront to her, the highest tribute I could give her—just as they damn my ability to translate the work of my mind into Rearden Metal, just as they damn me for the power to transform matter to serve my needs. I accepted their code and believed, as they taught me, that the only way to live was to follow their code.

interior animals.

I broke their code, but I fell into the trap they intended, the trap of a code devised to be broken. I took no pride in my rebellion, I took it as guilt, I did not damn them, I damned myself, I did not damn their code, I damned existence—and I hid my happiness as a shameful secret. I should have lived it openly, as of our right—or made her my wife, as in truth she was. But I branded my happiness as evil and made her bear it as a disgrace. What they want to do to her now, I did it first. I made it possible.

I did it—in the name of pity for the most contemptible woman I know. That, too, was their code, and I accepted it. I believed that one person owes a duty to another with no payment for it in return. I believed that it was my duty to love a woman who gave me nothing, who betrayed everything I lived for, who demanded her happiness as the price of mine. I believed that love is some static gift which, once granted, need no longer be deserved—just as they believe that wealth is a static possession which can be seized and held without further effort. I believed that love is a gratuity, not a reward.

as a

claim

on it

self-

core

"By every standard of mine to maintain our marriage."

vicious

yours, I

Here they are, lying on my desk, those standards I accepted without understanding, here is the manner of her love for me, that love which I never believed, but tried to spare. Here is the final product of the unearned. I thought that it was proper to commit injustice so long as I would be the only one to suffer. But nothing can justify injustice. And this is the punishment for accepting as proper the hideous evil which is self-immolation. I thought that I would be the only victim. Instead, I've sacrificed the noblest woman in the world. When one acts on pity against justice, it is the good whom one punishes for the sake of the evil; when one saves the guilty from suffering, it is the innocent whom one forces to suffer. There is no escape from justice: nothing can be unearned and unpaid for in the universe, neither in matter nor in spirit—and if the guilty do not pay then the innocent have to pay it.

It was not the cheap little looters of wealth who have beaten me—it was I. They did not disarm me—I threw away my weapon. This is a battle that cannot be fought except with clean hands—because the enemy's sole power is in the sores of one's conscience—and I accepted a code that made me regard the strength of my hands as a sin and a stain.

"Do we get the Metal, Mr. Rearden?"

He looked from the Gift Certificate on his desk to the memory of the girl on the flatcar. He asked himself whether he could deliver the radiant being he had seen in that moment, to the looters of the mind and the thugs of the press. Could he continue to let the innocent bear punishment? Could he let her take the stand he should have taken? Could he now defy the enemy's code, when the disgrace would be hers, not his—when the muck would be thrown at her, not at him—when she would have to fight, while he'd be spared? Could he let her existence be turned into a hell he would have no way of sharing?

He sat still, looking up at her. I love you, he said to the girl on the flatcar, silently pronouncing the words that had been the meaning of that moment four years ago, feeling the solemn happiness that belonged with the words, even though this was how he had to say it to her for the first time.

He looked down at the Gift Certificate. Dagny, he thought, you would not let me do it if you knew, you will hate me for it if you learn—but I cannot let you pay my debts. The fault was mine and I will not shift to you the punishment which is mine to take. Even if I have nothing else now left to me—  
truth, that I am free  
my own eyes, that I  
time—and that I will  
my code which I have never broken to be a man who pays his own way

I love you, he said to the girl on the flatcar, feeling as if the light of that summer's sun were touching his forehead, as if he, too, were standing under an open sky over an unobstructed earth, with nothing left to him except himself.

"Well, Mr. Rearden? Are you going to sign?" asked Dr. Ferris

the desk.

## Chapter VII THE MORATORIUM ON BRAINS

"Where have you been all this time?" Eddie Willers asked the worker in the underground cafeteria, and added, with a smile that was an appeal for sympathy and — — — — — "Oh, I know it's I

them and no food to feed them in jail, so nobody gives a damn any more, one way or another. I hear the deserters are just wandering about, doing odd jobs or worse—who's got any odd jobs to offer these days? . . . It's our best men that we're losing, the kind who've been with the company for twenty years or more. Why did they have to chain them to their jobs? Those men never intended to quit—just now the — — — — — at the object of disagreement, just

— — — — — or night,  
— — — — — out of bed  
— — — — — I should see  
— — — — — ncies. Some  
of them mean well, but they're scared of their own shadows. Others are the kind of acum I didn't think existed—they get the jobs and they know that we can't throw them out once they're in, so they

at insanity is a — — —  
— — — — — hat's real now is in-  
— — — — — to lose my mind.  
— — — — — p telling myself that

— — — — — I GO ON WORKING  
this is Taggart Transcontinental. I keep waiting for her to come back—for the door to open at any moment and—oh God, I'm not supposed to say that! . . . What? You knew it? You knew she's gone? . . . They're keeping it secret. But I guess supposed to say it. They're telling pe knows it, only



that she's away on a leave of absence. She's still listed as our Vice-President in Charge of Operation. I think Jim and I are the only ones who know that she has resigned for good. Jim is scared to death that his friends in Washington will take it out on him if it becomes known that she's quit. It's supposed to be disastrous for public mo- - - - - and I don't want them to tha wh

in Taggart Transcontinental if they learn that she's gone. Connell: You'd think that it wouldn't matter now since there's nothing any of them can do about it. And yet Jim knows that we have to preserve some semblance of the greatness that Taggart Transcontinental once stood for. And he knows that the last of it went with her. No, they don't know where she is. Yes, I do, but I won't tell them. I'm the only one who knows. Oh, yes, they've been trying to find out. They've tried to pump me in every way they could think of, but it's no use. I won't tell anyone. You should see the train seal that we now have in her place—our new Operating Vice President. Oh, sure, we have one—that is, we have and we haven't. It's like everything they do today—it is and it ain't at the same time. His name is Clifton Locey—he's from Jim's personal staff—a bright, progressive young man of forty-seven and a friend of Jim's. He's only supposed to be pinch-hitting for her, but he sits in her office and we all know that that's the new Operating Vice President. He gives the orders—that is, he sees to it that he's never caught actually giving an order. He works very hard at making sure that no decision can ever be pinned down on him so that he won't be blamed for anything. You see, his purpose is not to operate a railroad but to hold a job. He doesn't want to run trains—he wants to please Jim. He doesn't give a damn whether there's a single train moving or not so long as he can make a good impression on Jim and on the boys in Washington. So far, Mr. Clifton Locey has managed to frame up two men, a young third assistant for not relaying an order which Mr. Locey had never given—and the freight manager for issuing an order which Mr. Locey *did* give only the freight

in the midst of the most irrelevant drivel—what Miss Taggart used to do in such an emergency. I tell him whenever I can. I tell myself that it's Taggart Transcontinental and there's thousands of lives on dozens of trains that hang on our decisions. Between emergencies, Mr. Locey goes out of his way to be rude to me—that's so I wouldn't think that he needs me. He's made it a point to change everything she used to do in every respect that doesn't matter, but he's damn cautious not to change anything that matters. The only trouble is that he can't always tell which is which.

his first day in her office, he told me that it wasn't a good idea

once She told me not to . . . Last week, I almost quit. It was  
ever Chuck's Special Mr. Chuck Morrison of Washington, whoever  
he hell he is, has gone on a speaking tour of the whole country—to  
peak about the directive and build up the people's morale as things  
are getting to be pretty wild everywhere. He demanded a special  
train, for himself and party—a sleeper, a parlor car and a diner with  
barroom and lounge. The Unification Board gave him permission to  
travel at a hundred miles an hour—by reason, the ruling said, of this  
being a non profit journey. Well, so it is. It's just a journey to talk  
people into continuing to break their backs at making profits in order  
to . . .

You know the way our Diesels break down nowadays. Why it was  
breathing their last—so you can understand why that extra Diesel  
had to be kept at the tunnel. I explained it to Mr. Locey. I threat-  
ened him, I pleaded, I told him that she had made it our strictest  
rule that Winston Station was never to be left without an extra  
Diesel. He told me to remember that he was not Miss Taggart—  
as if I could ever forget it!—and that the rule was nonsense be-  
cause nothing had happened all these years so Winston could do  
without a Diesel for a couple of months and he wasn't going to  
worry about some theoretical disaster in the future when we were  
up against the very real practical immediate disaster of getting  
Mr. Chuck Morrison angry at us. Well, Chuck's Special got the  
Diesel. The superintendent of the Colorado Division quit. Mr.  
Locey gave that job to a friend of his own. I wanted to quit. I had  
never wanted to so badly. But I didn't. No, I haven't heard  
from her. I haven't heard a word since she left. Why do you keep  
questioning me about her? Forget it. She won't be back. I  
don't know what it is that I'm hoping for. Nothing, I guess. I just  
go day by day, and I try not to look ahead. At first, I hoped that  
somebody would save us. I thought maybe it would be Hank Rear-  
den. But he never did. I don't know what they did to him to make him  
do that. . . . something terrible. Every-  
body's wondering why  
nobody knows  
to see anyone.



own body and of branches stirring in the wind, with no lights  
the slow sparks of the fireflies flickering through the hedges.

ist means you use, how many of their judges you purchase or  
either you find it necessary to stage a frame-up of my wife. Do  
whatever you wish. But there is to be no alimony and no property  
division." The attorney had looked at him with the hint of a

with a kind of searching curiosity, almost as if they expected to find  
the scars of some physical torture on his body

He felt nothing—nothing but the sense of an even, restful twi-  
ght, like a spread of slag over a molten metal, when it crusts and  
swallows the last brilliant spurt of the white glow within. He felt

nothing at the thought of the judges who were now going to manu-  
ally his  
nor.  
are

what men made, what they sold, where they bought his Metal or  
The human  
ere physical  
in the dark-  
ing only an

untouched earth which he had once been able to handle—was real

He carried a gun in his pocket, as advised by the policemen of the  
radio car that patrolled the roads, they had warned him that no road  
was safe after dark, these days. He felt, with a touch of mirthless  
amusement, that the gun had been needed at the mills, not in the  
peaceful safety of loneliness and night, what could some starving  
vagrant take from him, compared to what had been taken by men  
who claimed to be his protectors?

He walked with an effortless speed, feeling relaxed by a form  
activity that was

solitude, he thought, he had to learn to live without any awareness of people, the awareness that now paralyzed him with revulsion. He had once built his fortune, starting out with empty hands; now he had to rebuild his life, starting out with an empty spirit.

He would give himself a short span of time for the training, he thought, and then he would claim the one incomparable value still left to him: the one desire that had remained pure and whole. He would go to Dagny. Two commandments had grown in his mind: one was a duty, the other a passionate wish. The first was never to let her learn the reason of his surrender to the looters, the second was to say to her the words which he should have known at their first meeting and should have said on the gallery of Ellis Wyatt's house.

There was nothing but the strong summer starlight to guide him as he walked, but he could distinguish the highway and the remnant of a stone fence ahead, at the corner of a country crossroad. The fence had nothing to protect any longer, only a spread of weeds, a willow tree bending over the road and, farther in the distance, the ruin of a farmhouse with the starlight showing through its roof.

He walked, thinking that even this sight still retained the power to be of value: it gave him the promise of a long stretch of space undisturbed by human intrusion.

The man who stepped suddenly out into the road must have come from behind the willow tree, but so swiftly that it seemed as if he had sprung up from the middle of the highway. Rearden's hand went to the gun in his pocket, but stopped: he knew—by the proud posture of the body standing in the open, by the straight line of the shoulders against the starlit sky—that the man was not a bandit. When he heard the voice, he knew that the man was not a beggar.

"I should like to speak to you, Mr. Rearden."

The voice had the firmness, the clarity and the special courtesy peculiar to men who are accustomed to giving orders.

"Go ahead," said Rearden, "provided you don't intend to ask me for help or money."

The man's garments were rough, but efficiently trim. He wore dark trousers and a dark blue windbreaker closed tight at his throat, prolonging the lines of his long slender figure. He wore a dark blue cap, and all that could be seen of him in the night were his hands, his face and a patch of gold blond hair on his temple. The hands held no weapon, only a package wrapped in burlap, the size of a carton of cigarettes.

"No, Mr. Rearden," he said, "I don't intend to ask you for money, but to return it to you."

"To return money?"

"Yes."

"What money?"

"A small refund on a very large debt."

"Owed by you?"

"No, not by me. It is only a token payment, but I want you to accept it as proof that if we live long enough, you and I, every dollar debt will be returned to you."

What debt?"

The money that was taken from you by force."

He extended the package to Rearden flipping the burlap open. Rearden saw the starlight run like fire along a mirror-smooth surface. He knew by its weight and texture that what he held was a bar of solid gold.

Rearden's face seemed

Do you mean that you had to stalk me at night on a lonely road, under not to rob me but to hand me a bar of gold?"

Yes."

Why?"

When robbery is done in open daylight by sanction of the law as done today then any act of honor or restitution has to be hidden underground."

What made you think that I'd accept a gift of this kind?"

It is not a gift, Mr. Rearden. It is your own money. But I have a favor to ask of you. It is a request, not a condition, because there can be no such thing as conditional property. The gold is yours so you are free to use it as you please. But I risked my life as a favor that you save. On nothing but your own say and above all do not

use your business."

Why?"

Because I don't want it to be of any benefit to anybody but you. Otherwise, I will have broken an oath taken long ago—as I am

I  
d

Then why did you?"

Because I couldn't stand it any longer."

Stand what?

I thought that I had seen everything one could see and that there was nothing I could not stand seeing. But when they took Rearden away from you it was too much even for me. I know that you don't need this gold at present. What you need is the justice that it represents, and the knowledge that there are men who care for justice."

Struggling not to give in to an emotion which he felt rising through his bewilderment past all his doubts, Rearden tried to study the man's face searching for some clue to help him understand. But the face had no expression. It had not changed since speaking. It looked as if the man had lost the capacity to feel, and what remained

implacable and dead With a shudder of astonishment, Rearden found himself thinking that it was not the face of a man, but of an avenging angel

"Why did you care?" asked Rearden "What do I mean to you?"

"Much more than you have reason to suspect. And I have a friend to whom you mean much more than you will ever learn. He would have given anything to stand by you today But he can't come to you So I came in his place"

"What friend?"

"I prefer not to name him"

"Did you say that you've spent a long time collecting this money for me?"

"What account?"

"If you try to think of all the money that has been taken from you by force, you will know that your account represents a considerable sum"

"How did you collect it? Where did this gold come from?"

"It was taken from those who robbed you"

"Taken by whom?"

"By me"

"Who are you?"

"Ragnar Danneskjöld."

Rearden looked at him for a long still moment, then let the gold fall out of his hands

"Would you rather which law should"

"if he were seen"

to be a victim who works for the benefit of his own despoilers did not choose to be either"

"You chose to live by means of force like the rest of them."

"Yes—openly Honestly, if you will I do not rob men who do not"

I have no answer to give you" said Rearden his voice low  
"Why should you be shocked Mr Rearden? I am merely coming with the system which my fellow men have established If I believe that force is the proper means to deal with one another I am giving them what they ask for If they believe that the purpose of my life is to serve them let them try to enforce their creed If they believe that my mind is their property—let them come and take it."

"But what sort of life have you chosen? To what purpose are you living your mind?"

"To the cause of my love"

"Which is what?"

"Justice"

"Served by being a pirate?"

"By working for the day when I won't have to be a pirate any longer"

"What is that?"

"... al" that

Danneshjold's face did not change "It is"

"Do you expect to have to see that day?"

"Yes Don't you?"

"No"

"Then what are you looking forward to, Mr Rearden?"

"Nothing"

"What are you working for?"

Rearden glanced at him Why do you ask that?

"To make you understand why I'm not"

"Don't expect me ever to approve of a criminal"

"I don't expect it. But there are a few things I want to help you to see."

"Even if they're true, the things you said why did you choose to be a bandit? Why didn't you simply step out like— He stopped

"Like Ellis Wyatt, Mr Rearden? Like Andrew Stockton? Like your friend Ken Danagger?"

"Yes!"

"Would you approve of that?"

"I—" He stopped shocked by his own words

The shock that came next was to see Danneshjold smile it was like seeing the first green of spring on the sculptured planes of an iceberg Rearden realized suddenly for the first time that

son of m

many cen

men's minds we will not b



disciplined capacity to feel too deeply The even voice was coming dispassionately

"I wanted you to know this I wanted you to know it now it must seem to you that you're abandoned at the bottom of a among subhuman creatures who are all that's left of wanted you to know, in your most hopeless hour, that the deliverance is much closer than you think. And there was special reason why I had to speak to you and tell you my ahead of the proper time Have you heard of what Orren Boyle's steel mills on the coast of Maine?"

"Yes," said Rearden—and was shocked to hear that the came as a gasp out of the sudden jolt of eagerness within him didn't know whether it was true"

"It's true. I did it Mr Boyle is not going to manufacture Metal on the coast of Maine He is not going to anywhere Neither is any other looting louse who thinks

...  
had Boyle think that force is all they need to rob their them see what happens when one of their betters chooses to force I wanted you to know, Mr Rearden, that none of will produce your Metal nor make a penny on it"

Because he felt an exultant desire to laugh—as he had at the news of Wyatt's fire, as he had laughed at the crash of Anconia Copper—and knew that if he did, the thing he would hold him, would not release him this time, and he never see his mills again—Rearden drew back and, for a kept his lips closed tight to utter no sound When the moment over he said quietly, his voice firm and dead, "Take that gold yours and get away from here I won't accept the help of a

Dannaskjöld's face showed no reaction. "I cannot force you accept the gold, Mr Rearden But I will not take it back. You leave it lying where it is, if you wish."

"I don't want your help and I don't intend to protect you. If were within reach of a phone, I would call the police I would I will, if you ever attempt to approach me again. I'll do a self protection."

"I understand exactly what you mean."

"You know—because I've Retained ...  
me eager to hear it—that I ...  
damn you or anyone else ...  
live by, so I don't care ...  
what manner they attempt ...  
your manner, I will let you ...  
no part of it. Neither as your inspiration nor as your accomplice ...  
I expect me ever to accept your bank account, if it does at

and it on some extra armor plate for yourself—because I'm  
to report this to the police and give them every clue I can  
set them on your trail."

Danneskjold did not move or answer. A freight train was rolling  
somewhere in the distance and darkness they could not see it,  
they heard the pounding beat of wheels filling the silence, and  
close, as if a disembodied train, reduced to a long string  
were going past them in the night.

"wanted to help me in my most hopeless hour?" said Rear  
"If I am brought to where my only defender is a pirate, then  
it care to be defended any longer. You speak some remnant

I started and I will go down with the last of it. I don't  
want to understand me, but—"

of light hit them with the violence of a physical blow  
of the train had swallowed the nose of the motor and  
heard the approach of the car that swept out of the  
from behind the farmhouse. They were not in the car's  
they heard the screech of brakes behind the two head  
ling an invisible shape to a stop. It was Rearden who  
uck involuntarily and had time to marvel at his com  
a swiftness of Danneskjold's self-control was that he did

a police car and it stopped beside them  
ver leaned out. "Oh, it's you Mr. Rearden!" he said,  
us fingers to his cap. "Good evening, sir."  
' said Rearden, fighting to control the unnatural abrupt  
voice.

were two patrolmen in the front seat of the car and their  
a tight look of purpose, not the look of their usual  
to stop for a chat.

did you walk from the mills by way of Edge-  
past Blacksmith Cove?"

"happen to see a man anywhere around these parts, "  
' along in a hurry?"

"either on foot or in a battered wreck of a car that's got  
dollar motor."

man?"

man with blond hair."

he?"

"don't believe it if I told you Mr. Rearden. Did you

was not aware of his own questions, only of the aston  
ct that he was able to force sounds past some beat  
side his throat. He was looking straight at the po  
felt as if the focus of his eyes had switched to "

hands relaxed, with no sign of intention to reach for a weapon, leaving the tall, straight body defenseless and open—open as to a firing squad. He saw, in the light, that the face looked younger than he had thought and that the eyes were sky blue. He felt that his danger would be to glance directly at Danneskjold—and he kept his eyes on the policeman on the brass buttons of a blue uniform, but the object filling his consciousness, more forcefully than a visual perception, was Danneskjold's body, the naked body under the clothes, the body that would be wiped out of existence. He did not hear his own words, because he kept hearing a single sentence.

"No," said Rearden "I didn't."

The policeman shrugged regretfully and closed his hands about the steering wheel. "You didn't see any man that looked suspicious?"

"No."

"Nor any strange car passing you on the road?"

"No."

The policeman reached for the starter. "They got word that he was seen ashore in these parts tonight, and they've thrown a drag net over five counties. We're not supposed to mention his name, not to scare the folks, but he's a man whose head is worth three million dollars in rewards from all over the world."

He had pressed the starter and the motor was churning the cap with bright cracks of sound, when the second policeman leaned forward. He had been looking at the blond hair under Danneskjold's cap.

"Who is that, Mr. Rearden?" he asked.

"My new bodyguard," said Rearden.

"Oh! A sensible precaution, Mr. Rearden, in times like these. Good night, sir."

The motor jerked forward. The red taillights of the car went shrinking down the road. Danneskjold glanced at he had gun in his

Danneskjold smiled. It was a smile of radiant amusement, the silent laughter of a clear young man who is glad to have lived. A the smile made other,

"You haven't bodyguard—that's more ways than you can know at present. Thanks, Mr. Rearden, and so long—we'll meet again much sooner than I had hoped."

He was gone before Rearden could answer. He vanished beyond

the stone fence, as abruptly and soundlessly as he had come. When

Kip Chalmers swore as the train lurched and spilled his cocktail over the table top. He slumped forward, his elbow in the puddle, and said:-

"God damn these railroads! What's the matter with their track? You'd think with all the money they've got they'd disgorge a little, so we wouldn't have to bump like farmers on a hay cart!"

His three companions did not take the trouble to answer. It was late, and they remained in the lounge merely because an effort was needed to retire to their compartments. The lights of the lounge looked like feeble portholes in a fog of cigarette smoke dank with the odor of alcohol. It was a private car, which Chalmers had

at  
stubborn monotone of the unthinking which asserts an end without  
concern for the means

He  
ed  
a  
cal  
in  
hat  
breeding that kind of aristocracy The college had taught him  
the purpose of ideas is to fool those who are stupid enough to  
the grace of a cat-  
to feel

For reasons of his own particular strategy, Kip Chalmers had decided to enter popular politics and to run for election as Legislator from California, though he knew nothing about that state except the movie industry and the beach clubs. His campaign manager had done the preliminary work, and Chalmers was now on his way to face his first election. He was an overpublicized man who had wanted him in Washington as soon as possible. He had shown no concern about the rally until this evening, when he noticed that the Comet was running six hours late.

His three companions did not mind his mood. They liked his liquor. Lester Tuck, his campaign manager, was a small, aged man with a face that looked as if it had once been punched in and had never rebounded. He was an attorney who, some generations earlier, would have represented shoplifters and people who stole from the poor.

He had been a movie actress who had forced her way from competent featured player to incompetent star, not by means of sleeping with studio executives, but by taking the long-distance short cut of sleeping with bureaucrats. She talked economics, instead of glamour, for press interviews, in the belligerently righteous style of a third rate tabloid. Her economics consisted of the assertion that "we've got to help the poor."

Gilbert Keith Worthing was Chalmers' guest, for no reason that either of them could discover. He was a British novelist of world fame, who had been popular thirty years ago, since then, nobody bothered to read what he wrote, but everybody accepted him as a walking classic. He had been considered profound for uttering such things as "Freedom? Do let's stop talking about freedom. Freedom is impossible. Man can never be free of hunger, of cold, of disease, of physical accidents. He can never be free of the tyranny of nature. So why should he object to the tyranny of a political dictatorship?" When all of Europe put into practice the ideas which he had preached, he came to live in America. Through the years, his style of writing and his body had grown flabby. At seventy, he was an obese old man with a large head and a small body.

They were all doing it on purpose. They want to ruin my campaign. I can't miss that rally! For Christ's sake, Lester, do something!

"I've tried," said Lester Tuck. At the train's last stop, he had tried, by long-distance telephone, to find air transportation to complete their journey; but there were no commercial flights scheduled for the next two days.

"If they don't get me there on time, I'll have their scalps and

me to get me where I want to go when I want it. Don't they know  
it I'm on this train?"

"They know it by now," said Laura Bradford. "Shut up Kip You  
re me."

the glass bay of the observation window at the end of the car,  
cept the small halos of red and green lanterns marking the rear  
the train and a brief stretch of rail running away from them  
to the darkness. A wall of rock was racing the train and the stars  
pped occasionally into a sudden break that outlined high above  
em the peaks of the mountains of Colorado

"Mountains" said Gilbert Keith Worthing with satisfaction.  
t is a spectacle of this kind that makes one feel the insignificance  
man. What is this presumptuous little bit of rail which crude  
sterialists are so proud of building—compared to that eternal  
andeur? No more than the basting thread of a seamstress on the  
m of the garment of nature. A single one of those granite giants

Laura Bradford, with

"This damn train is going slower" said Kip Chalmers  
those bastards are slowing down, in spite of what I told them!"

"Well it's the mountains you know" said Lester Tuck.

"Mountains be damned! Lester, what day is this? With all those  
mn changes of time, I can't tell which—"

"It's May 1st"

ung glancing

"ep," said Lester Tuck.

"We won't make it! We—"

The train gave a sharper lurch knocking the glass out of his hand  
le thin sound of its crash against the floor mixed with the screech  
the wheel flanges tearing against the rail of a sharp curve

"I say," asked Gilbert Keith Worthing nervously, "are your  
ads safe?"

"Hell, yes!" said Kip Chalmers "We've got so many rules regu  
lons and controls that those bastards wouldn't dare not to be  
fel Lester how far are we now? What's the next stop?"

"There won't be any stop till Salt Lake City"

"I mean what's the next station?"

Lester Tuck produced a soiled map, which he had

every few minutes since nightfall. "Winston," he said. "Winston, Colorado."

Kip Chalmers reached for another glass.

"Tinky Holloway said that Wesley said that if you don't win the election you're through," said Laura Bradford. She sat sprawled in her chair, looking past Chalmers, studying her own face in a mirror on the wall of the lounge; she was bored and it amused her to needle his impotent anger.

"Oh, he did, did he?"

"Uh-huh. Wesley doesn't want what's his name—whoever's running against you—to get into the Legislature. If you don't win, Wesley will be sore as hell," Tinky said.

"Damn that bastard! He'd better watch his own neck!"

"Oh, I don't know. Wesley likes him very much," she added. "Tinky Holloway wouldn't allow some miserable train to make him miss an important meeting. They wouldn't dare to hold him up."

Kip Chalmers sat staring at his glass. "I'm going to have the government seize all the railroads," he said, his voice low.

"Really?" said Gilbert Keith Worthing. "I don't see why you haven't done it long ago. This is the only country on earth backward enough to permit private ownership of railroads."

"Well, we're catching up with you," said Kip Chalmers.

"Your country is so incredibly naive. It's such an anachronism. All that talk about liberty and human rights—I haven't heard it since the days of my great grandfather. It's nothing but a verbal luxury of the rich. After all, it doesn't make any difference to the poor whether their livelihood is at the mercy of an industrialist or a bureaucrat."

"The day of the industrialists is over. This is the day of—"

The jolt felt as if the air within the car smashed them forward while the floor stopped under their feet. Kip Chalmers was flung down to the carpet. Gilbert Keith Worthing was thrown across the table top; the lights were blasted out. Glasses crashed off the shelves; the steel of the walls screamed as if about to rip open while a long, distant thud went like a convulsion through the wheels of the train.

When he raised his head, Chalmers saw that the car stood intact and still; he heard the moans of his companions and the first shriek of Laura Bradford's hysterics. He crawled along the floor to the doorway, wrenched it open, and tumbled down the steps. Far ahead, on the side of a curve, he saw moving flashlights and a red glow at a spot where the engine had no place to be. He stumbled through the darkness, bumping into half-clothed figures that waved the futile little flares of matches. Somewhere along the line he saw a man with a flashlight and seized his arm. It was the conductor.

"What happened?" gasped Chalmers.

"Split rail," the conductor answered impassively. "The engine went off the track."

"Off??"

"On its side?"

"Anybody killed?"

No The engineer's all right. The fireman is hurt."

Split rail? What do you mean, split rail?"

The conductor's face had an odd look it was grim, accusing closed. "Rail wears out, Mr Chalmers," he answered with a strange kind of emphasis "Particularly on curves"

Didn't you know that it was worn out?"

We knew"

Well, why didn't you have it replaced?"

"Cancelled that."

"at"

to look at him  
fault "Well . . .

ll, aren't you going to put the engine back on the track?"

"That engine's never going to be put back on any track, from looks of it"

"But . . . it's got to move us!"

"It can't."

Beyond the few moving flares and the dulled sounds of screams, Chalmers sensed suddenly, not wanting to look at it, the black immensity of the mountains, the silence of hundreds of uninhabited miles, and the precarious strip of a ledge hanging between wall of rock and an abyss He gripped the conductor's arm tighter

"But . . . but what are we going to do?"

"The engineer's gone to call Winston"

"Call? How?"

"There's a phone couple of miles down the track"

"Will they get us out of here?"

"They will"

"But . . ." Then his mind made a connection with the past and the future, and his voice rose to a scream for the first time "How long will we have to wait?"

"I don't know," said the conductor He threw Chalmers' hand from his arm, and walked away

The night operator of Winston Station listened to the phone message, dropped the receiver and raced up the stairs to shake the station agent out of bed The station agent was a husky, surly fellow who had been assigned to the job ten days ago by order of the new division superintendent He stumbled dazedly to his feet, but he was knocked awake when the operator's words reached his brain

"What?" he gasped "Jesus! The Comet? . . . Well, don't stand there shaking! Call Silver Springs!"

The night dispatcher of the Division Headquarters at Silver Springs listened to the message, then telephoned Dave Mitchum, the new superintendent of the Colorado Division

"The Comet?" gasped Mitchum, his hand pressing the telephone receiver to his ear, his feet hitting the floor and throwing him up-right, out of bed "The engine done for? The Diesel?"

"Yes, sir."



'Oh God! Oh, God Almighty! What are we going to do?' Then remembering his position, he added, "Well, send out the wreck train."

"I have."

"Call the operator at Sherwood to hold all traffic."

"I have."

"What have you got on the sheet?"

"The Army Freight Special, westbound. But it's not due for about four hours. It's running late."

"I'll be right down. Wait, listen, get Bill, Sandy and Clarence down by the time I get there. There's going to be hell to pay!"

Dave Mitchum had always complained about injustice, because he said, he had always had bad luck. He explained it by speaking darkly about the conspiracy of the big fellows, who would never give him a chance, though he did not explain just whom he meant by "the big fellows." Seniority of service was his favorite topic of complaint and sole standard of value, he had been in the railroad business longer than many men who had advanced beyond him. This, he said, was proof of the social system's injustice—though he never explained just what he meant by "the social system." He had worked for many railroads, but had not stayed long with any one of them. His employers had had no specific misdeeds to charge against him, but had simply eased him out, because he said "Nobody told me to!" too often. He did not know that he owed his present job to a deal between James Taggart and Wesley Mouch, when Taggart traded to Mouch the secret of his sister's private life, in exchange for a raise in rates, Mouch made him throw in an extra favor, by their customary rules of bargaining, which consisted of squeezing the hell out of the other fellow. The extra

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opinion James Taggart pushed the responsibility of finding a job for Mitchum onto Clifton Locey. Locey pushed Mitchum into the first job that came up—superintendent of the Colorado Division—when the man holding it quit without notice. The man quit when the extra Diesel engine of Winston Station was given to Chick Morrison's Special.

"What are we going to do?" cried Dave Mitchum rushing, half-dressed and groggy with sleep, into his office, where the chief dispatcher, the trainmaster and the road foreman of engines were waiting for him.

The three men did not answer. They were middle-aged men with years of railroad service behind them. A month ago, they would have volunteered their advice in any emergency; but they were beginning to learn that things had changed and that it was dangerous to speak.

"What in hell are we going to do?"

"One thing is certain," said Bill Brent, the chief dispatcher. "We can't send a train into the tunnel with a coal-burning engine."

Dave Mitchum's eyes grew sullen. He knew that this was the thought on all their minds, he wished Brent had not named

"Well, where do we get a Diesel?" he asked angrily.

"We don't," said the road foreman.

"But we can't keep the Comet waiting on a siding all night!" Looks like we'll have to," said the trainmaster. "What's the of talking about it, Dave? You know that there is no Diesel where on the division."

"But Christ Almighty, how do they expect us to move trains out engines?"

"Miss Taggart didn't," said the road foreman. "Mr. Locey does." Bill," asked Mitchum, in the tone of pleading for a favor, "is there anything transcontinental that's due tonight, with any of a Diesel?"

"The first one to come," said Bill Brent implacably, "will be number 236, the fast freight from San Francisco, which is due atuston at seven-eighteen A.M." He added, "That's the Diesel next to us at this moment I've checked."

"What about the Army Special?"

"Better not think about it, Dave. That one has superiority over anything on the line, including the Comet, by order of the way. They're running late as it is—journal boxes caught fire. They're carrying munitions for the West Coast arsenals. I'll pray that nothing stops them on your division. If you think you'll catch hell for holding the Comet, it's nothing to what we'll catch if we try to stop that Special."

They remained silent. The windows were open to the summer night and they could hear the ringing of the telephone in the spatcher's office downstairs. The signal lights winked over the

basis.

"I was only thinking," snapped Mitchum.

"Better not think of it," said Brent softly.

"I haven't said anything!"

"What was that talk you had with Dick Horton before he quit?" the road foreman asked too innocently, as if the subject were irrelevant. "Wasn't it something about the ventilation system of the tunnel being on the bum? Didn't he say that that tunnel was hardly safe nowadays even for Diesel engines?"

"Who?" Mitchum. "I haven't said  
engineer, had quit three

ad foreman answered in-

exactly

"Look, Dave," said Bill Brent, knowing that Mitchum stall for another hour rather than formulate a decision,

know that there's only one thing to do hold the Comet at Winston till morning wait for Number 236 have her Diesel take the Comet through the tunnel then let the Comet finish her run with the best coal burner we can give her on the other side."

"But how late will that make her?"

Brent shrugged Twelve hours—eighteen hours—who knows?"

Eighteen hours—for the Comet? Christ, that's never happened before!

"None of what's been happening to us has ever happened before," said Brent with an astonishing sound of weariness in his brisk, competent voice

But they'll blame us for it in New York! They'll put all the blame on us!

Brent shrugged A month ago he would have considered such an injustice inconceivable today he knew better

I guess said Mitchum miserably, "I guess there's nothing else that we can do

"There isn't, Dave"

"Oh God! Why did this have to happen to us?"

"Who is John Galt?"

It was half past two when the Comet pulled by an old switch engine jerked to a stop on a siding of Winston Station Kip Chalmers glanced out with incredulous anger at the few shanties on a desolate mountainside and at the ancient hovel of a station.

Now what? What in hell are they stopping *here* for? he cried, and rang for the conductor

With the return of motion and safety, his terror had turned into rage He felt almost as if he had been cheated by having been made to experience an unnecessary fear His companions were still clinging to the tables of the lounge, they felt too shaken to sleep

"How long? the conductor said impassively, in answer to his question "Till morning Mr Chalmers"

Chalmers stared at him stupefied, "We're going to stand here till morning?"

"Yes Mr Chalmers"

"Here?"

"Yes"

"But I have a rally in San Francisco in the evening!"

The conductor did not answer

"Why? Why do we have to stand? Why in hell? What happened?"

Slowly patiently with contemptuous politeness the conductor gave him an exact account of the situation But years ago in grammar school in high school in college Kip Chalmers had been taught that man does not and need not live by reason.

"Damn your tunnel!" he screamed "Do you think I'm going to let you hold me up because of some miserable tunnel? Do you want to wreck vital national plans on account of a tunnel? Tell your engineer that I must be in San Francisco by evening and that he's got to get me there!"



don't move my train at once, I'll let you guess the consequences  
Kip Chalmers.

After the boy had transmitted the words onto the wires that stretched from pole to pole across a continent the guardians of the Taggart track—after Kip Chalmers had returned to his car to wait for an answer—the station agent telephoned Dave Mitchum, who was his friend, and read to him the text of the message. He heard Mitchum groan in answer.

"I thought I'd tell you, Dave. I never heard of the guy before but maybe he's somebody important."

"I don't know!" moaned Mitchum. "Kip Chalmers? You see his name in the newspapers all the time, right in with all the top level boys. I don't know what he is, but if he's from Washington we can't take any chances. Oh Christ, what are we going to do?"

We can't take any chances—thought the Taggart operator in New York, and transmitted the message by telephone to James Taggart's home. It was close to six A.M. in New York, and James Taggart was awakened out of the fitful sleep of a restless night. He listened to the telephone, his face sagging. He felt the same fear as the station agent of Winston, and for the same reason.

He called the home of Clifton Locey. All the rage which he could not pour upon Kip Chalmers, was poured over the telephone wire upon Clifton Locey. "Do something!" screamed Taggart. "I don't care what you do, it's your job, not mine, but see to it that that train gets through! What in hell is going on? I never heard of the Comet being held up! Is that how you run your department? It's a fine thing when important passengers have to start sending messages to me! At least, when my sister ran the place, I wasn't awakened in the middle of the night over every spike that broke in Iowa—Colorado, I mean!"

"I'm so sorry, Jim," said Clifton Locey smoothly, in a tone that balanced apology, reassurance and the right degree of patronizing confidence. "It's just a misunderstanding. It's somebody's stupid mistake. Don't worry, I'll take care of it. I was, as a matter of fact, in bed, but I'll attend to it at once."

Clifton Locey was not in bed, he had just returned from a round of night clubs, in the company of a young lady. He asked her to wait and hurried to the offices of Taggart Transcontinental. None of the night staff who saw him there could say why he chose to appear in person, but neither could they say that it had been unnecessary. He rushed in and out of several offices, was seen by many people and gave an impression of great activity. The only physical result of it was an order that went over the wires to Dave Mitchum, superintendent of the Colorado Division.

"Give an engine to Mr. Chalmers at once. Send the Comet through safely and without unnecessary delay. If you are unable to perform your duties, I shall hold you responsible before the Unification Board, Clifton Locey."

Then, calling his girl friend to join him, Clifton Locey drove to a country roadhouse—to make certain that no one would be able to find him in the next few hours.

The dispatcher at Silver Springs was baffled by the order that he handed to Dave Mitchum, but Dave Mitchum understood. He knew that no railroad order would ever speak in such terms as giving an engine to a passenger; he knew that the thing was a how piece he guessed what sort of show was being staged and he felt a cold sweat at the realization of who was being framed as the goat of the show.

"What's the matter, Dave?" asked the trainmaster.

Mitchum did not answer. He seized the telephone, his hands shaking as he begged for a connection to the Taggart operator in New York. He looked like an animal in a trap.

He begged the New York operator to get him Mr. Clifton Locey's home. The operator tried. There was no answer. He begged the operator to keep on trying and to try every number he could think of, where Mr. Locey might be found. The operator promised and Mitch—  
s useless to wait or to

by the look on the trainmaster's face that the trap was as bad as he had suspected.

He called the Region Headquarters of Taggart Transcontinental at Omaha, Nebraska, and begged to speak to the general manager of the region. There was a brief silence on the wire, then the voice of the Omaha operator told him that the general manager had resigned and vanished three days ago—"over a little trouble with Mr. Locey," the voice added.

He asked to speak to the assistant general manager in charge of his particular district, but the assistant was out of town for the week end and could not be reached.

"Get me somebody else!" Mitchum screamed. "Anybody, of any district! For Christ's sake, get me somebody who'll tell me what to do!"

The man who came on the wire was the assistant general manager of the Iowa-Minnesota District.

"What?" he interrupted at Mitchum's first words. "At Winston, Colorado? Why in hell are you calling me?" No, don't tell me what happened, I don't want to know it! No, I said! No! You're not going to frame me into having to explain afterwards why I did or didn't do anything about whatever it is. It's not my problem! . . . Speak to some region executive, don't pick on me, what do I have to do with Colorado? . . . Oh hell, I don't know, get the chief engineer, speak to him!"

The chief engineer of the Central Region answered impatiently, "Yes? What? What is it?"—and Mitchum rushed desperately to explain. When the chief engineer heard that there was no Diesel, he snapped "Then hold the train, of course!" When he heard about Mr. Chalmers, he said, his voice suddenly subdued, "Hm—Kip Chalmers? Of Washington? . . . Well, I don't—would be a matter for Mr. Locey to decide." When "Mr. Locey ordered me to arrange it, but—" the

snapped in great relief, "Then do exactly as Mr Locey says" and hung up.

Dave Mitchum replaced the telephone receiver cautiously. He did not scream any longer. Instead, he tiptoed in a chair, almost as if he were sneaking. He sat looking at Mr Locey's order for a long time.

Then he snatched a glance about the room. The dispatcher was busy at his telephone. The trainmaster and the road foreman were there but they pretended that they were not waiting. He wished Bill Brent, the chief dispatcher, would go home. Bill Brent stood in a corner, watching him.

Brent was a short, thin man with broad shoulders, he was forty, but looked younger, he had the pale face of an office worker and the hard, lean features of a cowboy. He was the best dispatcher on the system.

Mitchum rose abruptly and walked upstairs to his office, clutching Locey's order in his hand.

Dave Mitchum was not good at understanding problems of engineering and transportation but he understood men like Clifton Locey. He understood the kind of game the New York executives were playing and what they were now doing to him. The order did not tell him to give Mr Chalmers a coal burning engine—just "an engine." If the time came to answer questions, wouldn't Mr Locey gasp in shocked indignation that he had expected a division superintendent to know that only a Diesel engine could be meant in that order? The order stated that he was to send the Comet through "safely—wasn't a division superintendent expected to know what was safe?"—and without unnecessary delay. What was an unnecessary delay? If the possibility of a major disaster was involved, wouldn't a delay of a week or a month be considered necessary?

The New York executives did not care, thought Mitchum, they did not care whether Mr Chalmers reached his meeting on time, or whether an unprecedented catastrophe struck their rails, they cared only about making sure that they would not be blamed for either. If he held the train, they would make him the scapegoat to appease the anger of Mr Chalmers. If he sent the train through and it did not reach the western portal of the tunnel, they would put the blame on his incompetence, they would claim that he had acted against their orders, in either case. What would he be able to prove? To whom? One could prove nothing to a tribunal that had no stated policy, no defined procedure, no rules of evidence, no binding principles—a tribunal, such as the Unification Board, that pronounced men guilty or innocent as it saw fit, with no standard of guilt or innocence.

Dave Mitchum knew nothing about the philosophy of law, but he knew that when a court is not bound by any rules, it is not bound by any facts, and then a hearing is not an issue of justice, but an issue of men, and your fate depends not on what you have or have not done but on whom you do or do not know. He asked what chance he would have at such a hearing against Mr

James Taggart, Mr Clifton Locey, Mr Kip Chalmers and their powerful friends.

Dave Mitchum had spent his life slipping around the necessity of ever making a decision, he had done it by waiting to be told and never being certain of anything. All that he now allowed into his brain was a long, indignant whine against injustice. Fate, he thought, had singled him out for an unfair amount of bad luck—he was being framed by his superiors on the only good job he had ever held. He had never been taught to understand that the manner in which he obtained this job, and the frame up, were inextricable parts of a single whole.

As he looked at Locey's order, he thought that he could hold the Comet, attach Mr Chalmers' car to an engine and send it into the tunnel, alone. But he shook his head before the thought was fully formed—he knew that this would force Mr Chalmers to recognize the nature of the risk, Mr Chalmers would refuse, he would continue to demand a safe and non-existent engine. And more this would mean that he, Mitchum, would have to assume responsibility, admit full knowledge of the danger, stand in the open and identify the exact nature of the situation—the one act which the policy of his superiors was based on evading, the one key to their game.

Dave Mitchum was not the man to rebel against his background or to question the moral code of those in charge. The choice he made was not to challenge, but to follow the policy of his superiors. Bill Brent could have beaten him in any contest of technology, but here was an endeavor at which he could beat Bill Brent without effort. There had once been a society where men needed the particular talents of Bill Brent, if they wished to survive, what they needed now was the talent of Dave Mitchum.

Dave Mitchum sat down at his secretary's typewriter and, by means of two fingers, carefully typed out an order to the train master and another to the road foreman. The first instructed the trainmaster to summon a locomotive crew at once, for a purpose described only as "an emergency", the second instructed the road foreman to "send the best engine available to Winston, to stand by for emergency assistance."

He put carbon copies of the orders into his own pocket, then opened the door, yelled for the night dispatcher to come up and handed him the two orders for the two men downstairs. The night dispatcher was a conscientious young boy who trusted his superiors and knew that discipline was the first rule of the railroad business. He was astonished that Mitchum should wish to send written orders down one flight of stairs, but he asked no questions.

Mitchum waited nervously. After a while he saw the figure of the road foreman walking across the yards toward the roundhouse. He felt relieved—the two men had not come up to confront him in person, they had understood and they would play the game as he was playing it.

The road foreman walked across the yards, looking the ground. He was thinking of his wife, his two child



house which he had spent a lifetime to own. He knew what his superiors were doing and he wondered whether he should refuse to obey them. He had never been afraid of losing his job, with the confidence of a competent man, he had known that if he quarreled with one employer, he would always be able to find another. Now he was afraid, he had no right to quit or to seek a job, if he defied an employer he would be delivered into the unanswerable power of a single Board and if the Board ruled against him, it would mean being sentenced to the slow death of starvation it would mean being barred from any employment. He knew that the Board would rule against him he knew that the key to the dark, capricious mystery of the Board's contradictory decisions was the secret power of pull. What chance would he have against Mr. Chalmers? There had been a time when the self interest of his employers had demanded that he exercise his utmost ability. Now, ability was not wanted any longer. There had been a time when he had been required to do his best and rewarded accordingly. Now, he could expect nothing but punishment, if he tried to follow his conscience. There had been a time when he had been expected to think. Now they did not want him to think, only to obey. They did not want him to have a conscience any longer. Then why should he raise his voice? For whose sake? He thought of the passengers—the three hundred passengers aboard the Comet. He thought of his children. He had a son in high school and a daughter, nineteen of whom he was fiercely, painfully proud, because she was recognized as the most beautiful girl in town. He asked himself whether he could deliver his children to the fate of the children of the unemployed as he had seen them in the blighted areas, in the settlements around closed factories and along the tracks of discontinued railroads. He saw, in astonished horror, that the choice which he now had to make was between the lives of his children and the lives of the passengers on the Comet. A conflict of this kind had never been possible before. It was by protecting the safety of the passengers that he had earned the security of his children. He had served one by serving the other, there had been no clash of interests, no call for victims. Now, if he wanted to save the passengers he had to do it at the price of his children. He remembered dimly the sermons he had heard about the beauty of self immolation, about the virtue of sacrificing to others that which was one's dearest. He knew nothing about the philosophy of ethics, but he knew suddenly—not in words, but in the form of a dark, angry, savage pain—that if this was virtue, then he wanted no part of it.

He walked into the roundhouse and ordered a large, ancient coal burning locomotive to be made ready for the run to Winston.

The trainmaster reached for the telephone in the dispatcher's

ical sensation of cold, nothing more, he felt no concern, only a

uzzled, indifferent astonishment. It had never been his job to call them out to die, his job had been to call them out to earn their living. It was strange, he thought, and it was strange that his hand had stopped, what made it stop was like something he would have felt twenty years ago—no, he thought, strange, only one month ago, not longer.

He was forty-eight years old. He had no family, no friends, no ties to any living being in the world. Whatever capacity for devotion he had possessed, the capacity which others scatter among many random concerns, he had given it whole to the person of his young brother—the brother, his junior by twenty five years, whom he had brought up. He had sent him through a technological college, and he had known, as had all the teachers, that the boy had the mark of genius on the forehead of his grim, young face. With the same single-tracked devotion as his brother's, the boy had cared for nothing but his studies—not for sports or parties or girls—only for the vision of

May 1 that he had been informed that his brother had committed suicide

The first news that he had been informed that his brother had committed suicide

that it would be bad for the country's morale.

The trainmaster knew nothing about political philosophy, but he knew that that had been the moment when he lost all concern for the life or death of any human being or of the country.

He thought holding the telephone receiver that maybe he should warn the men whom he was about to call. They trusted him—it would never occur to them that he could knowingly send them to their death. But he shook his head—this was only an old thought, last year's thought, a remnant of the time when he had trusted them, too. It did not matter now. His brain worked slowly—as if he were dragging his thoughts through a vacuum where no emotion responded to spur them on—he thought that there would be trouble if he warned anyone—there would be some sort of fight and it was he who had to make some great effort to start it. He had forgotten what it was that one started this sort of fight for—Truth? Justice? Brother love? He did not want to make an effort. He was very tired. If he warned all the men on his list, he thought, there would

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he summoned an engineer and a fireman to report for duty at once. Engine Number 306 had left for Winston when Dave Mitchum came downstairs. "Get a track motor car ready for me," he ordered.

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"I'm going to Fairmount," said Mitchum, his voice was aggressively too casual, as if implying that no answer was necessary. "The Diesel had a breakdown there couple of weeks ago—you know emergency repairs or something. I'm going down to see if we could use it."

He paused, but Brent said nothing.

"The way things stack up," said Mitchum, not looking at him, "we can't hold that train till morning. We've got to take a chance one way or another. Now I think maybe this Diesel will do it, but that's the last one we can try for. So if you don't hear from me in an hour, sign the order and send the Comet through with Number 306 to pull her."

Whatever Brent had thought, he could not believe it when he heard it. He did not answer at once; then he said very quietly, "No."

"What do you mean, no?"

"I won't do it."

"What do you mean you won't? It's an order!"

"I won't do it," Brent's voice had the firmness of certainty unclouded by any emotion.

"Are you refusing to obey an order?"

"I am."

"But you have no right to refuse! And I'm not going to argue about it either. It's what I've decided; it's my responsibility, and I'm not asking for your opinion. Your job is to take my orders."

"Will you give me that order in writing?"

"Why God damn you, are you hinting that you don't trust me? Are you?"

"Why do you have to go to Fairmount, Dave? Why can't you telephone them about that Diesel? If you think that they have one."

"You're not going to tell me how to do my job! You're not going to sit there and question me! You're going to keep your trap shut and do as you're told or I'll give you a chance to talk—to the Unionification Board!"

It was hard to decipher emotions on Brent's cowboy face, but Mitchum saw something that resembled a look of incredulous horror, only it was horror at some sight of his own, not at his words, and it had no quality of fear, not the kind of fear Mitchum had hoped for.

Brent knew that tomorrow morning the issue would be his own.

against Mitchum's, Mitchum would deny having given the order; Mitchum would show written proof that Engine Number 306 had been sent to Winston only "to stand by," and would produce witnesses that he had gone to Fairmount in search of a Diesel. Mitchum would claim that the fatal order had been issued by and on the sole responsibility of Bill Brent, the chief dispatcher. It would not be much of a case, not a case that could bear close study, but it would be enough for the Unification Board, whose policy was consistent

expose this thing and stop it—no superior anywhere on the line, from Colorado to Omaha to New York. They were in on it, all of them, they were doing the same, they had given Mitchum the lead and the method. It was Dave Mitchum who now belonged on this railroad and he, Bill Brent, who did not.

As Bill Brent had learned to see, by a single glance at a few numbers on a sheet of paper, the entire trackage of a division—so he was now able to see the whole of his own life and the full price of the decision he was making. He had not fallen in love until he

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must live by his own rational perception of reality, that he cannot act against it or escape it or find a substitute for it—and that there is no other way for him to live.

He rose to his feet. "It's true that so long as I hold this job, I cannot refuse to obey you," he said. "But I can, if I quit. So I'm quitting."

"You're what?"  
"I'm quitting."

I won't try to escape. There's no place to go."

Dave Mitchum  
but his  
Bill Br-

You can't walk out on me! I won't let you out! I won't let you leave this building tonight!"

Brent walked to the door. "Will you repeat that order you gave me in front of the others? No? Then I will."

As he pulled the door open, Mitchum's fist shot out, smashed into his face and knocked him down.

The trainmaster and the road foreman stood in the open doorway.

"He quit!" screamed Mitchum. "The yellow bastard quit at a time like this! He's a law breaker and a coward!"

In the slow effort of rising from the floor, through the haze of blood running into his eyes, Bill Brent looked up at the two men. He saw that they understood, but he saw the closed faces of men who did not want to understand, did not want to interfere and hated him for putting them on the spot in the name of justice. He said nothing, rose to his feet and walked out of the building.

Mitchum avoided looking at the others. "Hey, you," he called jerking his head at the night dispatcher across the room. "Come here. You've got to take over at once."

With the door closed, he repeated to the boy the story of the Diesel at Fairmount, as he had given it to Brent, and the order to send the Comet through with Engine Number 306, if the boy did not hear from him in half an hour. The boy was in no condition to think to speak or to understand anything; he kept seeing the blood on the face of Bill Brent who had been his idol. "Yes sir," he answered numbly.

Dave Mitchum departed for Fairmount, announcing to every yardman, switchman and wiper in sight, as he boarded the track motor car, that he was going in search of a Diesel for the Comet.

The night dispatcher sat at his desk, watching the clock and the telephone, praying that the telephone would ring and let him hear from Mr. Mitchum. But the half hour went by in silence, and when there were only three minutes left, the boy felt a terror he could not explain, except that he did not want to send that order.

He turned to the trainmaster and the road foreman, asking hesitantly "Mr. Mitchum gave me an order before he left, but I wonder whether I ought to send it because I . . . I don't think it's right. He said—"

The trainmaster turned away, he felt no pity; the boy was about the same age as his brother had been.

The road foreman snapped "Do just as Mr. Mitchum told you. You're not supposed to think," and walked out of the room.

The responsibility that James Taggart and Clifton Locey had evaded now rested on the shoulders of a trembling bewildered boy. He hesitated, then he buttressed his courage with the thought that one did not doubt the good faith and the competence of railroad executives. He did not know that his vision of a railroad and its executives was that of a century ago.

With the conscientious precision of a railroad man, in the moment when the hand of the clock ended the half hour, he signed his name to the order instructing the Comet to proceed with Engine Number 306, and transmitted the order to Winston Station.



in evasion from the kind of verdicts that the Unification Board was passing on defenseless victims—why shouldn't he now turn away from them? If he saved their lives not one of them would come forward to defend him when the Unification Board would convict him for disobeying orders, for creating a panic, for delaying Mr Chalmers. He had no desire to be a martyr for the sake of allowing people safely to indulge in their own irresponsible evil.

When the moment came he raised his lantern and signaled the engineer to start.

"See?" said Kip Chalmers triumphantly to Lester Tuck, as the wheels under their feet shuddered forward. "Fear is the only practical means to deal with people."

The conductor stepped onto the vestibule of the last car. No one saw him as he went down the steps of the other side, slipped off the train and vanished into the darkness of the mountains.

with a beam stretching high above his head and a jerky wobble trembling through the rail under his feet. He knew that the sweet

now hate his job for the rest of his life.

The Comet uncoiled from the siding into a thin, straight line and went on into the mountains with the beam of the headlight like an extended arm pointing the way, and the lighted glass curve of the observation lounge ending it off.

Some of the passengers aboard the Comet were awake. As the train started its coiling ascent they saw the small cluster of Winston's lights at the bottom of the darkness beyond their windows, then the same darkness but with red and green lights by the hole of a tunnel on the upper edge of the windowpanes. The lights of Winston kept growing smaller each time they appeared, the black hole of the tunnel kept growing larger. A black veil went streaking past the windows at times dimming the lights. It was the heavy smoke from the coal-burning engine.

As the tunnel came closer, they saw at the edge of the sky far to the south in a void of space and rock a spot of living fire twisting in the wind. They did not know what it was and did not care to learn.

It is said that catastrophes are a matter of pure chance and there were those who would have said that the passengers of the Comet were not guilty or responsible for the thing that happened to them.

everything is achieved collectively and that it's masses that count, not men.

The man in Roomette 7, Car No 2, was a journalist who wrote "a good cause," upon violate like of whatever he chose to consider as his own idea of "a good cause," which did not even have to be an idea, since he had never defined what he regarded as the good, but had merely stated that he went by "a feeling"—a feeling unrestrained by any knowledge, since he considered emotion superior to knowledge and relied solely on his own "good intentions" and on the power of a gun.

The woman in Roomette 10, Car No 3, was an elderly school teacher who had spent her life turning class after class of helpless children into miserable cowards, by teaching them that the will of the majority is the only standard of good and evil that a majority may do anything it pleases, that they must not assert their own personalities, but must do as others were doing.

The man in Drawing Room B, Car No 4, was a newspaper publisher who had spent his life in the service of the public.

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The woman in Roomette 10, Car No 3, was a teacher who believed that, as a consumer she had "a right" to transportation, whether the railroad people wished to provide it or not.

The man in Roomette 2, Car No 9, was a professor of economics who advocated the abolition of private property explaining that intelligence plays no part in the matter.

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a railroad.

The woman in Roomette 10, Car No 3, was a mother who had put her two children to sleep in the berth above her, carefully tucking them in, protecting them from drafts and jolts, a mother whose husband held a government job enforcing directives which she defended by saying, "I don't care, it's only the rich that they hurt. After all, I must think of my children."

The man in Roomette 3, Car No 11, was a sniveling little neurotic who wrote cheap little plays into which as a social message, he inserted cowardly little obscenities to the effect that all business men were scoundrels.



The woman in Roomette 9, Car No 12 was a housewife who believed that she had the right to elect politicians, of whom she knew nothing to control giant industries, of which she had no knowledge

The man in Bedroom F Car No 13, was a lawyer who had said "Me? I'll find a way to get along under any political system."

*the law of cause-and-effect—to lig w*  
*men to their jobs by force?—no morality—what's moral about run*  
*ning a railroad?—no absolutes—what difference does it make to you*  
*whether you live or die anyway? He taught that we know nothing*  
*—why oppose the orders of your superiors?—that we can never*  
*certain of anything—how do you know you're right?—that we must*  
*act on the expediency of the moment—you don't want to risk your*  
*job do you?*

The man in Drawing Room B Car No 15, was an heir who had inherited his fortune and who had kept repeating "Why should Rearden be the only one permitted to manufacture Rearden Metal?"

The man in Bedroom A Car No 16, was a humanitarian who had said "The men of ability? I do not care what or if they are made to suffer. They must be penalized in order to support the incompetent. Frankly I do not care whether this is just or not. I take pride in not caring to grant any justice to the able where mercy to the needy is concerned."

These passengers were awake there was not a man aboard the train who did not share one or more of their ideas. As the train went into the tunnel the flame of Wyatt's Torch was the last thing they saw on earth.

## Chapter VIII BY OUR LOVE

The sun touched the tree tops on the slope of the hill, and the light looked a bluish silver catching the color of the sky. Dagny stood at the door of the cabin with the first sunrays on her forehead and miles of forest spread under her feet. The leaves went down from silver to green to the smoky blue of the shadows on the road below. The light trickled down through the branches and shot upward in sudden spurts when it hit a clump of ferns that became a fountain of green rays. It gave her pleasure to watch the motion of the light over a stillness where nothing else could move.

on the sheet  
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whether she had reached it or not. She had come here with three assignments given, as orders, to herself—rest—learn to live without a railroad—get the pain out of the way. Get it out of the way, were the words she used. She felt as if she were tied to some wounded stranger who could be stricken at any moment by an attack that would drown her in his screams. She felt no pity for the stranger, only a contemptuous impatience; she had to fight him and destroy him, then her way would be clear to decide what she wished to do, but the stranger was not easy to fight.

The assignment to rest had been easier. She found that she liked the solitude, she awakened in the morning with a feeling of contentment, benevolence, the sense that she could venture forth and be able to deal with whatever she found. In the city, she had lived in a chronic tension to withstand the shock of anger, indignation, disgust, contempt. The only danger to threaten her here was the simple pain of some physical accident, it seemed innocent and easy by comparison.

The work . . . . .

names of the windows. Rains, weeds and brush had swallowed the steps of what had once been a terraced path rising up the hill from the road to the cabin. She rebuilt it, clearing the terraces, re-laying the stones, bracing the banks of soft earth with walls of boulders. It gave her pleasure to devise complex systems of levers and pulleys out of old scraps of iron and rope, then to move weights of rock that were much beyond her physical power. She planted a few seeds of nasturtiums and morning glories, to see one spreading slowly over the ground and the other climbing up the tree trunks, to see them grow, to see progression and movement.

The work gave her the calm needed, she had not noticed how she began it or why, she had started without conscious intention, but she saw it growing under her hands, pulling her forward, giving her a healing sense of peace. Then she understood that what she needed was the motion to a purpose, no matter how small or in what form, the sense of an activity going step by step to some chosen end across a span of time. The work of cooking a meal was like a closed circle, completed and gone, leading nowhere. But the work of building a path was a living sum, so that no day was left to die behind her, but each day contained all those that preceded it, each day acquired its immortality on every succeeding tomorrow. A circle, she thought, is the movement proper to physical nature, they say that there's nothing but circular motion in the inanimate universe around us . . . . . the straight line

run, but what would be the imbecile torture of running in a circle that had no run to make? It is not proper for man's life to

circle, she thought, or a string of circles dropping off like zeros behind him—man's life must be a straight line of motion from goal to farther goal, each leading to the next and to a single growing sum, like a journey down the track of a railroad, from station to station to—oh, stop it!

Stop it—she told herself in quiet severity, when the scream of the wounded stranger was choked off—don't think of that, don't look too far, you like building this path, build it, don't look beyond the foot of the hill.

She had driven a few times to the store in Woodstock, twenty miles away, to buy supplies and food. Woodstock was a small huddle of dying structures, built generations ago for some reason and hope long since forgotten. There was no railroad to feed it, no electric power, nothing but a county highway growing emptier year by year.

The only store was a wooden hovel, with spider-eaten corners and a rotted patch in the middle of the floor, eaten by the rains that came through the leaking roof. The storekeeper was a fat, pallid woman who moved with effort, but seemed indifferent to her own discomfort. The stock of food consisted of dusty cans with faded labels, some grain, and a few vegetables rotting in ancient bins outside the door.

Driving back to the cabin, Dagny looked up at a mountain stream that fell with ferocious force down a sheer granite wall, its spray hanging like a mist of rainbows in the sun. She thought that one could build a hydroelectric plant, just large enough to supply the power for her cabin and for the town of Woodstock—Woodstock could be made to be productive—those wild apple trees she saw in such unusual numbers among the dense growth on the hillsides, were the remnants of orchards—suppose one were to reclaim them, then build a small spur to the nearest railroad—oh, stop it!

"No kerosene today," the storekeeper told her on her next trip to Woodstock. "It rained Thursday night, and when it rains, the trucks can't get through Fairfield gorge, the road's flooded, and the kerosene truck won't be back this way till next month." "If you know that the road gets flooded every time it rains, why don't you people repair it?" The woman answered, "The road's always been that way."

Driving back, Dagny stopped on the crest of a hill and looked down at the miles of countryside below. She looked at Fairfield gorge where the county road, twisting through marshy soil below the level of a river, got trapped in a crack between two hills. It would be simple to by-pass those hills, she thought, to build a road on the other side of the river—the people of Woodstock had nothing to do, she could teach them—cut a road straight to the southwest, save miles, connect with the state highway at the freight depot of—oh, stop it!

She put her kerosene lamp aside and sat in her cabin after dark by the light of a candle, listening to the music of a small portable

on her first night in the cabin—don't think of it until you're able to hear the words as if they were "Atlantic Southern" or "Associated Steel." But the weeks passed and no scar would grow over the wound.

It seemed to her as if she had been told to stop it at his words.

At the window of her car on her last trip, she must tell them to stop it or they—and then she would be sitting up in bed crying, Stop it!—and stopping it, but remaining awake for the rest of that night.

She would sit at the door of the cabin at sunset and watch the motion of the leaves growing still in the twilight—then she would see the sparks of the fireflies rising from the grass, flashing on and off in every darkening corner, flashing slowly as if holding one moment's warning—they were like the lights of signals winking at night over the track of a—Stop it!

It was the times when she could not stop it that she dreaded the times when, unable to stand up—as in physical pain, with no limit to divide it from the pain of her mind—she would fall down on the floor of the cabin or on the earth of the woods and sit still, with her face pressed to a chair or a rock, and fight not to let herself scream aloud, while they were suddenly as close to her and as real as the body of a lover—the two lines of rail going off to a single point in the distance—the front of an engine cutting space apart by means of the letters TT—the sound of the wheels clicking in accented rhythm under the floor of her car—the statue of Nat Taggart in the concourse of the Terminal Fighting not to know them not to feel them, her body rigid but for the grinding motion of her face against her arm, she would draw whatever power over her consciousness still remained in her into the soundless, toneless repetition of the words Get it over with.

There were long stretches of calm, when she was able to face her problem with the dispassionate clarity of weighing a problem in engineering. But she could find no answer. She knew that her desperate longing for the railroad would vanish, were she to convince herself that it was impossible or improper. But the longing came from the certainty that the truth and the right were hers—that the enemy was the irrational and the unreal—that she could not set herself another goal or summon the love to achieve it, while her rightful achievement had been lost, not to some superior power, but to a loathsome evil that conquered by means of impotence.

She could renounce the railroad, she thought, she could find contentment here in the life of the earth, she could find the path then to the earth.

would be the limit placed on her effort. Why?—she heard herself screaming aloud. There was no answer.

Then stay here until you answer it, she thought. You have no place to go, you can't move, you can't start grading a right-of-way until you know enough to choose a terminal.

There were long silent evenings when the emotion that made her sit still and look at the unattainable distance beyond the fading light to the south, was loneliness for Hank Rearden. She wanted the sight of his unyielding face, the confident face looking at her with the hint of a smile. But she knew that she could not see him until her battle was won. His smile had to be deserved, it was intended for an adversary who traded her strength against his, not for a pain-beaten wretch who would seek relief in that smile and thus destroy its meaning. He could help her to live; he could not help her in decide for what purpose she wished to go on living.

She had felt a faint touch of anxiety since the morning when she marked May 15 on her calendar. She had forced herself to listen to news broadcasts once in a while, she had heard no mention of his name. Her fear for him was her last link to the city, it kept drawing

some large bird's wings hurtling through the branches into the bay. There was another link to the past that still remained as an unsolved question. Quentin Daniels and the motor that he was trying to rebuild. By June 1 she would owe him his monthly check. Should she tell him that she had quit, that she would never need that motor and neither would the world? Should she tell him to stop and to let the remnant of the motor vanish in rust on some such junk pile as the one where she had found it? She could not force herself to

was no terminal for her to seek ahead.

But it is not true—she thought. As she stood at the door of her cabin on this morning of May 28—it is not true that there is no place in the future for a superlative achievement of man's mind. It can never be true. No matter what her problem, this would always remain to her—this immovable conviction that evil was unnatural.

from the radio. She barely listened, she was conscious only of the flow of chords that seemed to play an underscoring harmony for the flow of the smoke curving slowly from her cigarette, for the curv

motion of her arm moving the cigarette to her lips once in a while. She closed her eyes and started to feel the curve of the

A noise was growing louder and that it was the sound of a motor when she knew that she had not admitted to herself how much she liked Frank. Frank was only looking at her as he drove.

She could not see the road—the small stretch under the arch of the ranches at the foot of the hill was her only view of it—but she watched the car's ascent by the growing, imperious strain of the tires on curves.

She did not recognize a long, gray contour. She saw the driver step out. It was a man whose presence there could not be possible. It was Francisco d'Anconia.

The shock she felt was not disappointment, it was more like the sensation that disappointment would now be irrelevant. It was a freshness and an odd, solemn stillness, the sudden certainty that he was facing the approach of something unknown and of the gravest importance.

The swiftness of Francisco's movements was carrying him toward the hill while he was raising his head to glance up. He saw her above, at the door of the cabin, and stopped. She could not distinguish the expression on his face.

When he was close enough and she could distinguish his face, she saw the look of that luminous gaiety which transcends the solemnity by proclaiming the great innocence of a man who has earned the right to be taken seriously.

belonged with this moment, yet she felt also that there was something odd about it, something important to grasp, only she could not think of it now.

"Hi, Slug!"

"Hi, Frisco!"

She knew—by the way he looked at her, by an instant's drop of his eyelids closing his eyes, by the brief pull of his head striving to lean back and resist by the faint, half smiling half helpless relaxation of his lips, by the sudden harshness of his arms — he seized her—that it was involuntary, that he had not intended it, and that it was irresistibly right for both of them.

The desperate violence of the way he held her, the hurting pressure of his mouth on hers, the exultant surrender of his body to the touch of hers, were not the form of a moment's pleasure—she knew that no physical hunger could bring a man to this—she knew that it was the statement she had never heard from him, the greatest confession of love a man could make. No matter what he had done to wreck his life, this was still the Francisco d'Anconia in whose bed she had been so proud of belonging—no matter what betrayals she had met from the world, her vision of life had been true and some indestructible part of it had remained within him—and in answer to it, her body responded to his her arms and mouth held him, confessing her desire, confessing an acknowledgment she had always given him and always would.

Then the rest of his years came back to her, with a stab of the pain of knowing that the greater his person, the more terrible his

ness in  
a touch  
for in  
whistling  
" was

hat  
&  
she  
up

"Well, what torture you've been going through, here, for the last twelve years—answer me as honestly as you can . . . do you think you could have borne it twelve years ago?"

"No," she answered he smiled "Why do you ask that?"

"To re- . . . What  
her—"an

"Dagn  
about it?

"How did you Francisco! What were you whistling when you were coming up the hill?"

"Why, was I? I don't know."





She shrugged, with a faint smile of helpless sadness, and sat down on the ground beside him "You know," she said, "I used to think that there was some destroyer who came after them and made them quit. But I guess there wasn't. There have been times, this past month when I've almost wished he would come for me, too. But nobody came."

"No?"

"No. I used to think that he gave them some inconceivable reason to make them betray everything they loved. But that wasn't necessary. I know how they felt. I can't blame them any longer. What I don't know is how they learned to exist afterward—if any of them still exist."

"Do you feel that you've betrayed Taggart Transcontinental?"

"No. I feel that I would have betrayed it by remaining a work."

"You would have?"

"If I had agreed to serve the looters, it's . . . it's Nat Taggart that I would have delivered to them. I couldn't. I couldn't let his . . . final goal."

"You think"

"on the"

railroad. But I can't go back to it."

"Then you know what they felt, all the men who quit, and what it was that they loved when they gave up?"

"Francisco," she asked, not looking at him, her head bent. "Why did you ask me whether I could have given it up twelve years ago?"

"Don't you know what night I am thinking of, just as you are?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"That was the night I gave up d'Anconia Copper."

Slowly, with a long effort, she moved her head to glance up at him. His face had the expression she had seen then, on that night . . . oh, he was not . . . of a man's . . . or in paying . . . You're still . . . hung to you . . . now."

"It means as much to me now as it did that night."

"Then how can you let it go to pieces?"

"Dagny, you're more fortunate than I. Taggart Transcontinental is a delicate piece of precision machinery. It will not last long without you. It cannot be run by slave labor. They will mercifully destroy it for you, and you won't have to see it serving the looters. But copper mining is a simpler job. d'Anconia Copper could have lasted for generations of looters and slaves. Crudely, miserably, ineptly—but it could have lasted and helped them to last. I had to destroy it myself."

"You—what?"

"I am destroying d'Anconia Copper, consciously, deliberately, by plan and by my own hand. I have to plan it as carefully and work

hard ■ if I were producing a fortune—in order not to let them  
see it and stop me in order not to let them seize the mines until  
is too late. All the effort and energy I had hoped to spend on  
Anconia Copper I'm spending them only only it's not to  
make it grow I shall destroy every last bit of it and every last  
penny of my fortune and every ounce of copper that could feed  
the looters I shall not leave it as I found it—I shall leave it as  
Sebastián d'Anconia found it—then let them try to exist without  
him or me."

"Francisco" she screamed "How could you make yourself do it?"

"By the grace of the same love as yours," he answered quietly,  
"my love for d'Anconia Copper for the spirit of which it was the  
hope was—and some day will be again."

She sat still trying to grasp all the implications of what she now  
grasped only as the numbness of shock. In the silence the music of  
the radio symphony went on and the rhythm of the chords reached  
her like the slow solemn pounding of steps while she struggled to  
see at once the whole progression of twelve years the tortured boy  
who called for help on her breasts—the man who sat on the floor of  
a drawing room playing marbles and laughing at the destruction of  
great industries—the man who cried, "My love I can't!" while  
refusing to help her—the man who drank a toast in the dim booth of  
a barroom to the years which Sebastián d'Anconia had had to  
wait.

"Francisco of all the guesses I tried to make about you  
I never thought of it I never thought that you were one of

you—that  
you looking at a cheap playboy who was not the Francisco  
d'Anconia you had known?"

"Yes" she whispered "only the worst was that I couldn't  
believe it I never did It was Francisco d'Anconia that I  
kept seeing every time I saw you"

"I know And I know what it did to you I tried to help you  
understand."

at a glance of ■ Anconia Copper of Taggart Trans  
continental of Wyatt Oil of Rearden Steel—would you have found  
it easier to take?"

"Harder" she whispered "I'm not sure I can take it, even now  
neither your kind of renunciation nor my own But, Fran  
cisco—she threw her head back suddenly to look up at him—"if  
this was your secret, then of all the hell you had to take I was—"  
"Oh yes, my darling yes you were the worst of it! It was a  
desperate cry  
agonizing w  
mouth to it

his years had been like "If it's any kind of atonement, which it isn't—whatever I made you suffer that's how I paid for it by knowing what I was doing to you and having to do it and waiting waiting to—But it's over"

He raised his head smiling he looked down at her and she saw a look of protective tenderness come into his face which told her of the despair he saw in hers

"Dagny don't think of that I won't claim any suffering of mine as my excuse Whatever my reason I knew what I was doing and I've hurt you terribly I'll need years to make up for it. Forget what—she knew that he meant what his embrace had confessed—what I haven't said Of all the things I have to tell you that's the one I'll say last But his eyes his smile the grasp of his finger on her wrist were saying it against his will You've borne too much and there's a great deal that you have to learn to understand in order to lose every scar of the torture you never should have had to bear All that matters now is that you're free to recover We're free both of us we're free of the looters we're out of their reach"

She said her voice quietly desolate "That's what I came here for—to try to understand But I can't It seems monstrously wrong to surrender the world to the looters and monstrously wrong to live under their rule I can neither give up nor go back I can neither exist without work nor work as a serf I had always thought that any sort of battle was proper anything except renunciation I'm sure we're right to quit you and I when we should have fought them But there is no way to fight It's surrender if we leave—an surrender if we remain I don't know what is right any longer"

"Check your premises Dagny Contradictions don't exist"

But I can't find any answer I can't condemn you for what you're doing yet it's horror that I feel—admiration and horror at the same time You the heir of the d'Anconias who could have surpassed all his ancestors of the miraculous hand that produced you're turning me into a monster of destruction And I—I'm

while a transgressor of congenital wars terminate the fate of then it must have been our own guilt But I can't see the nature of our error"

"Yes Dagny it was our own guilt"

"Because we didn't work hard enough?"

"Because we worked too hard—and charged too little?"

"What do you mean?"

"We never demanded the one payment that the world owed us and we let our best reward go to the worst of men The error was made centuries ago it was made by Sebastián d'Anconia, by Nathaniel Taggart by every man who fed the world and received no thanks in return You don't know what is right any longer? Dagny it's not a battle over material goods It's a moral crisis the greatest the world has ever faced and the last Our age is the climax centuries of evil We must put an end to it, once and for all"

—we the men of the mind. It was our own guilt. We produced the wealth of the world—but we let our enemies write its code."

But we never accepted their code. We lived by our own stand-

allowed men to despise us and to worship our destroyers. We

... feel that no  
... our enemies  
... abusing you by means of your own power. Your generosity  
... your endurance are their only tools. Your unrequited rectitude

The  
must  
you do  
that  
in let

... To  
most

... it isn't any longer. Leave it to them. It won't do them  
good. Let it go. We don't need it. We can rebuild it. They

... material objects as such because we're the  
who create their value and meaning. We can afford to give  
up for a short while, in order to redeem something much  
precious. We are the soul, of which railroads, copper mines,  
mills and oil wells are the body—and they are living entities  
beat day and night like our hearts, in the sacred function of  
organizing human life, but only so long as they remain our body,  
so long as they remain the expression, the reward and the  
prize of achievement. Without us, they are corpses and their  
product is poison, not wealth or food, the poison of disintegra-  
tion that turns men into hordes of scavengers. Dagny, learn to un-  
derstand the nature of your own power and you'll understand the  
idea you now see around you. You do not have to depend on  
material possessions, they depend on you, you create them.

you own the one and only tool of production. Wherever you are you will always be able to produce. But the looters—by their own stated theory—are in desperate, permanent, congenital need and at the blind mercy of matter. Why don't you take them at their word? They need railroads, factories, mines, motors, which they cannot

without you  
it, time and  
Who fed the  
in the mean

to enslave you? The impossible spectacle of shabby little incompetents holding control over the products of genius—who made it possible? Who supported your enemies, who forged your chains, who destroyed your achievement?

The motion that threw her upright was like a silent cry. He stooped to his feet with the stored abruptness of a spring uncoiling, his voice driving on in merciless triumph.

"You're beginning to see, aren't you? Dagny! Leave them the carcass of that railroad, leave them all the rusted rails and rotten ties and gutted engines—but don't leave them your mind! Don't leave them your mind! The fate of the world rests on that decision!"

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the panic pregnant voice of a radio announcer, "we interrupt your program to bring you this news: a great disaster has occurred in the Rocky Mountain Tunnel. The great locomotive, the Comet, has been wrecked. The train is trapped. The situation is very serious. We will continue to report as the facts develop."

"What time is it?" asked Dagny.

"It is ten o'clock," answered the radio announcer.

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weight of the long train and the rising grade of the track. Struggling through the thickening fumes, engineer and fireman had barely managed to force the leaking steam boilers up to a speed of forty miles per hour—when some passenger, prompted undoubtedly by the sudden stoppage of the train, leaped from the engine. Passengers were breaking windows. Engineer Beal struggled vainly to make the engine start, but collapsed at the throttle, overcome by the fumes. Fireman Beal leaped from the engine and ran to the western portal, when he heard the report of the explosion, which was the last thing he remembers. The rest of the story was gathered from railroad employees at Winston.

It is said that the frequent breaking of all engines in the west is due to the fact that the engines are not properly maintained.

The explosion of the special train on the Colorado River brought down such a weight of rock upon the tunnel that rescue parties have not yet been able to come within three miles of where either train had been. It is not expected that any survivors will be found—and it is not believed that the Taggart Tunnel can ever be rebuilt.

She stood still. She looked as if she were seeing, not the room, but the scene that had taken place in the tunnel.

The only object in existence, she seized it, she whirled to the door and ran.

"Dagny!" he screamed. "Don't go back!" The scream had no more power to reach her than if he were calling to her across the miles between him and the mountains of Colorado.

He ran after her, he caught her, seizing her by both elbows, and he cried, "Don't go back! Dagny! In the name of anything sacred to you."

... a contest of her arms with his, hung for

she tore herself loose so violently that she threw him off balance for a moment. When he regained his footing, she was running down the hill—running as he had run at the sound of the alarm siren! Rearden's mills—running to her car on the road below.

His letter of resignation lay on the desk before him—and Jane Taggart sat staring at it hunched by hatred. He felt as if his entire life were this piece of paper, not the words on it but the sheet and the ink that had given the words a material finality. He had always regarded thought and words as inconclusive, but a material shape was that which he had spent his life escaping—a commitment.

He had not decided to resign—not really, he thought, he had dictated the letter for a motive which he identified to himself only as “just in case.” The letter, he felt, was a form of protection but he had not signed it. The hatred that he would no longer

He had received word of the catastrophe at eight o'clock this morning, by noon, he had arrived at his office. An instinct that came from reasons which he knew but spent his whole effort on not knowing had told him that he had to be there, this time.

The men who had been his marked cards—in a game he knew how to play—were gone. Clifton Locey was barricaded behind the statement of a doctor who had announced that Mr. Locey was suffering from a heart condition which made it impossible to disturb him at present. One of Taggart's executive assistants was said to have left for Boston last night, and the other was said to have been called

to be found

Driving through the streets to his office, Taggart had seen the black letters of the headlines. Walking down the corridors of Taggart Transcontinental, he had heard the voice of a speaker pouring from a radio in someone's office, the kind of voice one expects to hear on unlighted street corners. It was a demand for the

busy  
T  
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bro.  
wh  
He had to be here, hoping that the lock would hold out for eternity, sit idly and to determine

re for him and of the fact that nobody came, nobody to tell him it to do

he ringing of the telephones in the outer office sounded like calls for help. He looked at the door with a sensation of malevolent triumph in the thought of all those voices being defeated by impenetrable fire.

near them

his emotions had clogged into a still solid, opaque ball within him, which the thought of the men who operated the Taggart system did not pierce, those men were merely enemies to be outwitted. The sharper bites of fear came from the thought of the men on the board of Directors, but his letter of resignation was his fire escape, which would leave them stuck with the fire. The sharpest fear came from the thought of the men in Washington. If they called, he would have to answer, his rubber secretary would know whose voices superseded his orders. But Washington did not call.

The fear went through him in spasms, once in a while leaving him with dry lips. He did not know what he dreaded. He knew that it was the threat of the radio speaker. What he had experienced at the sound of the snarling voice had been more like a terror which he

never, but neither would anyone else. Neither would anyone

He sat, looking down at his desk, keeping his eyes and his mind out of focus. It was as if he were immersed in a pool of fog struggling not to let it reach the finality of any form. That which exists without identity, he could keep it out of existence by refusing to identify it.

He did not examine the events in Colorado. He did not attempt to grasp the

The ringing of the telephones went on through the





despair, except the face of Eddie Willers. The "feudal serf" of Taggart Transcontinental was the only one who seemed untouched by the disaster. He looked at Taggart with the lifelessly conscientious glance of a scholar confronted by a field of knowledge he had never wanted to study.

"Do you realize that you're a traitor?" yelled Taggart.

onomic  
anything  
I know

"Don't you see that I don't give a damn about that?"

"Oh you don't? I'll quote that to the Unification Board! I have all these witnesses to prove that you said—"

"Don't bother about witnesses, Jim. Don't put them on the spot. I'll write down everything I said, I'll sign it, and you can take it to the Board."

The sudden explosion of Taggart's voice sounded as if he had been slapped. "Who are you to stand against the government? Who are you, you miserable little office rat, to judge national policies and hold opinions of your own? Do you think the country has time to bother about your opinions, your wishes or your precious little conscience? You're going to learn a lesson—all of you!—all of you spoiled self-indulgent, undisciplined little two-bit clerks who strut as if that crap about your rights was serious! You're going to learn that these are not the days of Nat Taggart!"

Eddie said nothing. For an instant, they stood looking at each other, startled by terror. Eddie's

what do we care whether she wants to work or not? We need her!

"Do you, Jim?"

An impulse pertaining to self-preservation made Taggart back a step away from the sound of that particular tone, a very quiet tone, in the voice of Eddie Willers. But Eddie made no move to follow. He remained standing behind his desk, in a manner suggesting the civilized tradition of a business office.

"You can't find it in your heart to back me up, can you?"

Persons in her eyes, the glance merely swept through the room.

if making a swift inventory of physical objects. Her face was not the face they remembered, it had aged, not by means of lines, but by means of a still, naked look stripped of any quality save ruthlessness.

Yet their first response, ahead of shock or wonder, was a single emotion that went through the room like a gasp of relief. It was in all their faces but one, Eddie Willers, who alone had been calm: a moment ago, collapsed with his face down on his desk, he made no sound, but the movements of his shoulders were sobs.

Her face gave no sign of acknowledgment to anyone, no greeting as if her presence here were inevitable and no words were necessary. She went straight to the door of her office, passing the desk of her secretary, she said her voice like the sound of a business machine, neither rude nor gentle, "Ask Eddie to come in."

James Taggart was the first one to move, as if dreading to let her out of his sight. He rushed in after her, he cried, "I couldn't help it!" and then, life returning to him, his own, his normal kind of life, he screamed, "It's your fault! You did it! You're to blame for it! Because you left!"

He wondered whether his scream had been an illusion inside his own ears. Her face remained blank, yet she had turned to him, she looked as if sounds had reached her, but not words, not the commotion that was his closest

... the indication of perceiving a human presence, but she was looking past him and he turned and saw that Eddie Willers had entered the office.

There were traces of tears in Eddie's eyes, but he made no attempt to hide them. ... embarrassment

... a lot of rail

... and, his "L."

... they did not notice ...

... a sense of resignation.

She did not notice his exit, she was looking at Eddie. "Is Knowland here?" she asked.

"No. He's gone."

"Andrews?"

"Gone."

"McGuire?"

"Gone."

He went on quietly to recite the list of those he knew she would ask for, those most needed in this hour, who had resigned and departed within the past month. She listened without astonishment.

or emotion, as one listens to the casualty list of a battle where all are doomed and it makes no difference whose names fall first.

When he finished, she made no comment, but asked, "What has been done since this morning?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Dagny, any office boy could have issued orders here since this morning and everybody would have obeyed him. But even the office boys know that whoever makes the first move today will be held responsible for the future, the present and the past—when the buck-passing begins. He would not save the system, he would merely lose his job by the time he saved one division. Nothing has been done. It's stopped still. Whatever is moving, is moving on anyone's blind guess—out on the line where they don't know whether they're to move or to stop. Some trains are held at stations, others are going on, waiting to be stopped before they reach Colorado. It's whatever the local dispatchers decide. The Terminal manager downstairs has cancelled all transcontinental traffic for today, including tonight's Comet. I don't know what the manager in San Francisco is doing. Only the wrecking crews are working. At the tunnel! They haven't come anywhere near the wreck as yet. I don't think they will."

"Phone the Terminal manager downstairs and tell him to put all transcontinental trains back on the schedule at once, including tonight's Comet. Then come back here."

When he came back, she was bending over the maps she had spread on a table, and she spoke while he made rapid notes.

"Route all westbound trains south from Kirby, Nebraska, down the spur track to Hastings, down the track of the Kansas Western to Laurel, Kansas, then to the track of the Atlantic Southern at Lasper, Oklahoma. West on the Atlantic Southern to Flagstaff, Arizona, north on the track of the Flagstaff Homedale to Elgin, Utah, north to Midland, northwest on the track of the Wasatch Railway to Salt Lake City. The Wasatch Railway is an abandoned narrow gauge. Buy it. Have the gauge spread to standard. If the

twice the legal wages, three times anything they ask—put three shifts on—and have the job done overnight. For rail, tear up the sidings at Winston, Colorado, at Silver Springs, Colorado at Leeds, Utah, at Benson, Nevada. If any local stooges of the Unification Board come to stop the work—give authority to our local men, the ones you trust, to bribe them. Don't put that through the Accounting Department, charge it to me, I'll pay it. If they find some case where it doesn't work, have them tell the stooge that Directive 10

"How do I know? How can anybody know? But by the time they untangle it and decide whatever it is they please to decide—our track will be built."

"I see."

"I'll go over the lists and give you the names of our local men to put in charge—if they're still there. By the time tonight's Comet reaches Kirby, Nebraska, the track will be ready. It will add about thirty-six hours to the transcontinental schedule—but there will be a transcontinental schedule. Then have them get for me one of the files the old maps of our road as it was before Nat Taggart's grandson built the tunnel."

"The what?" He did not raise his voice, but the catch of his breath was the break of emotion he had wanted to avoid.

Her face did not change, but a faint note in her voice acknowledged him, a note of gentleness, not reproof. "The old maps of the days before the tunnel. We're going back, Eddie. Let's hope we can. No, we won't rebuild the tunnel. There's no way to do it now. But the old grade that crossed the Rockies is still there. It can be reclaimed. Only it will be hard to get the rail for it and the men to do it. Particularly the men."

He knew, as he had known from the first, that she had seen his tears and that she had not walked past in indifference, even though her clear, toneless voice and unmoving face gave him no sign of feeling. There was some quality in her manner, which he sensed but could not name.

cover that there is no air to breathe.

"We have today and tomorrow to get things started," she said. "I'll leave for Colorado tomorrow night."

"If you want to fly, I'll have to rent a plane for you somewhere. Yours is still in the shops, they can't get the parts for it."

"No, I'll go by rail. I have to see the line. I'll take tomorrow's Comet."

It was two hours later, in a brief pause between long-distance phone calls, that she asked him suddenly the first question which did not pertain to the railroad. "What have they done to Hank Rearden?"

Eddie caught himself in the small evasion of looking away, forced his glance back to meet hers, and answered, "He gave in. He signed the contract."

... merely a  
act. "Have

"He sent no letter or message for me?"

"No."

He guessed the thing she feared and it reminded him of a matter he had not reported. "Dagny, there's another problem that's been

all over the system since you left. Since May first It's the trains "

what?"

they try to go on and then they suddenly reach a moment when  
and take it any longer What can we do about it?" He shrugged.  
Well, who is John Galt?"

nodded thoughtfully, she did not look astonished

the telephone rang and the voice of her secretary said, "Mr.  
Wesley Mouch calling from Washington, Miss Taggart."

her lips stiffened a little, as at the unexpected touch of an insect.  
Must be for my brother," she said.

to Miss Taggart For you "

all right. Put him on "

Miss Taggart," said the voice of Wesley Mouch in the tone of a  
tail-party host, "I was so glad to hear you've regained your  
feet that I wanted to welcome you back in person I know that  
your health required a long rest and I appreciate the patriotism that  
made you cut your leave of absence short in this terrible emergency  
I wanted to assure you that you can count on our co-operation in  
every step you now find it necessary to take Our fullest co-operation,  
assistance and support If there are any special exceptions you  
might require, please feel certain that they can be granted "

he let him speak, even though he had made several small pauses  
in giving an answer When his pause became long enough she said,  
I would be much obliged if you would let me speak to Mr  
Weatherby "

"Yes Right now "

He understood. But he said, "Yes, Miss Taggart."

When Mr Weatherby's voice came on the wire it sounded cau-  
tious "Yes, Miss Taggart? Of what service can I be to you?"

"You can tell your boss that if he doesn't want me to quit again  
he knows I did, he is never to call me or speak to me Anything  
the gang has to tell me, let them send you to tell it I'll speak to  
you, but not to him You may tell him that my reason is what he  
said to Hank Rearden when he was on Rearden's payroll If every  
body else "

Tag  
son  
of  
qua

at any time Miss  
trying to avoid the  
but a sudden note  
thoughtfully with  
Taggart, that it is

a few tall buildings still rose above it, like funnels, but the rest was

same longing

She felt—as she had felt it one spring night, slumped across her desk in the crumbling office of the John Galt Line, by a window facing a dark alley—the sense and vision of her own world, which she would never reach. You—she thought—whoever you are whom I have always loved and never found you whom I expected

love and my hope to reach you and my wish to be worthy of you on the day when I would stand before you face to face. Now I know that I shall never find you—that it is not to be reached or lived—but what is left of my life is still yours, and I will go on in your name even though it is a name I'll never learn, I will go on serving you even though I'm never to win, I will go on, to be worthy of you on the day when I would have met you even though I won't.

She had never accepted hopelessness, but she stood at the window and, addressed to the shape of a fogbound city, it was her self-dedication to unrequited love.

The doorbell rang.

She turned with indifferent astonishment to open the door—but she knew that she should have expected him when she saw that it was Francisco d'Anconia. She felt no shock and no rebellion, only the cheerless serenity of her assurance—and she raised her head to face him with a slow deliberate movement, as if telling him that she had chosen her stand and that she stood in the open.

action, as she had once expected him to look—he had never seemed so attractive as he did in this moment—and she noted in astonishment, her sudden feeling that he was not a man who had deserted her but a man whom she had deserted.

"Dagny are you able to talk about it now?"

"Yes—if you wish. Come in."

He glanced briefly at her living room, her home which he had never entered, then his eyes came back to her. He was watching her attentively. He seemed to know that the quiet simplicity of her manner was the worst of all signs for his purpose that it was like spread of ashes where no flicker of pain could be revived, that even

"I don't think I can stop you now," he said "if you've made your  
ace. But if there's one chance left to stop you, it's a chance I  
've to take."

She shook her head slowly "There isn't. And—what for Fran-  
co? You've given up. What difference does it make to you whether  
perish with the railroad or away from it?"

"I haven't given up the future."

"What future?"

"The day when the looters will perish, but we won't."

"If Taggart Transcontinental is to perish with the looters, then so  
I."

He did not take his eyes off her face and he did not answer.

He said:

...

... what they're all accepting—Francisco it's the thing we  
ought so monstrous, you and I—the belief that disasters are ones  
natural fate, to be borne, not fought. I can't accept submission. I  
can't accept helplessness. I can't accept renunciation. So long as

... loves one's work. I  
... what it means to you, the job of running trains. But you would  
run them if they were empty. Dagny, what is it you see when  
you think of a moving train?"

He glanced at the city. "The life of a man of ability who might  
be perished in that catastrophe but will escape the next one which  
prevent—a man who has an intransigent mind and an unlimited  
vision, and is in love with his own life. The kind of man who  
that we were when we started you and I. You gave him up  
didn't."

He closed his eyes for an instant, and the tightening movement  
his mouth was a smile, a smile substituting for a moan of under-  
standing.

... all right, Dagny. I won't try to stop you. So long as you still  
think that, nothing can stop you, or should. You will stop on the day  
when you'll discover that your work has been placed in the service,  
not of that man's life, but of his destruction."

"Francisco!" It was a cry of astonishment and despair. "You do  
understand it, you know what I mean by that kind of man, you see  
it, too!"

He said: ...  
it ...  
y ...  
...



"Yes," she said sternly, "one of us has. We cannot serve him! renunciation."

"We cannot serve him by making terms with his destroyers."

"I'm not making terms with them. They need me. They know it. It's my terms that I'll make them accept."

"By playing a game in which they gain benefits in exchange for harming you?"

"If I can keep Taggart Transcontinental from doing the best benefit to them."

He said:

"Is your

want? No, you won't quit until you see, of your own sight and judgment, what it is that they really want. You know, Dagny, we were taught that some things are worth dying for. Perhaps their thinking—he does, between your

your actions, no tributes to Caesar. He permits no Caesars."

"For twelve years," she said softly, "I would have thought it is conceivable that there might come a day when I would have to beg your forgiveness on my knees. Now I think it's possible. If I come to see that you're right, I will. But not until then."

"You will. But not on your knees."

He was looking at her, as if he were seeing her body as she stood before him, even though his eyes were directed at her face, and his glance told her what form of atonement and surrender he was seeing in the future. She saw the effort he made to look away, his hope that she had not seen his glance or understood it, his silent struggle, betrayed by the tension of a few muscles under the skin of his face—the face she knew so well.

"Until then, Dagny, remember that we're enemies. I didn't want to tell you this, but you're the first person who almost stepped into heaven and came back to earth. You've glimpsed too much, so you have to know this clearly. It's you that I'm fighting, not your brother James or Wesley Mouch. It's you that I have to defeat. I am going to end all the things that are most precious to you right now. While you'll struggle to save Taggart Transcontinental, I will be working to destroy it. Don't ever ask me for help or money. You know my reasons. Now you may hate me—as, from your stand, you should."

She raised her head a little, there was no perceptible change in her posture, it was no more than her awareness of her own body and

"I cannot but mine," he answered.

It was she who weakened, but realized, while saying it, that this was still more cruel. "I don't hate you. I've tried to, for years, but I never will, no matter what we do, either one of us."

"I know it," he said, his voice low, so that she did not hear the  
n, but felt it within herself as if by direct reflection from him  
"Francisco" she cried, in desperate defense of him against herself.

can,"  
I will

nowl-

gment.

"I want to go through," he  
not me that you should  
travel that road by his

"What does it lead?  
He smiled, as if softly closing a door on the questions that he  
could not answer. "To Atlantis," he said

"What?" she asked, startled  
"Don't you remember?—the lost city that only the spirits of heroes  
can enter."

The connection that struck her suddenly had been struggling in  
her mind.

ic  
ic

perhaps the enemy she was facing  
"You're one of them," she said slowly, 'aren't you?"

"Of whom?"  
"Was it you in Ken Danagger's office?"

He smiled. "No" But she noted that he did not ask what she  
meant.

"Is there—you would know it—is there actually a destroyer loose  
in the world?"

"Of course"  
"Who is it?"  
"You"

She shrugged, her face was growing hard "The men who've quit,  
are they still alive or dead?"

"There's no one there's to be a  
r to  
ords.

"I always wait for you, no matter what we do, until you find us"  
The sound they heard was the turning of a key in the lock of the  
entrance door. The door opened and Hank Rearden came in.

He stopped briefly on the threshold, then walked slowly into the  
living room, his hand slipping the key into his pocket.

She knew that he had seen Francisco's face before he had seen  
hers. He glanced at her, but his eyes came back to Francisco, as if  
this were the only face he was now able to see

It was at Francisco's face that she was afraid to look. The

she made to pull her glance along the curve of a few steps felt as she were pulling a weight beyond her power. Francisco had risen on his feet, as if in the unhurried, automatic manner of a dancer trained to the code of courtesy. There was nothing that Rearden could see in his face. But what she saw in it was worse than it had feared.

"What are you doing here?" asked Rearden, in the tone one would use to address a menial caught in a drawing room.

"I see that I have no right to ask you the same question," said Francisco. She knew what effort was required to achieve the colorless quality of his voice. His eyes kept returning to Rearden's right hand, as if he were still seeing the key between his fingers.

"Then answer it," said Rearden.

"Hark, any questions you wish to ask should be asked of me," she said.

Rearden did not seem to see or hear her. "Answer it," he repeated.

"There is only one answer which you would have the right to demand," said Francisco. "So I will answer you that that is not the reason of my presence here."

won  
conc  
you

as you will said to me!

"I have given you grounds not to trust me, but none to include Miss Taggart."

"Don't tell me that you have no chance here, never had and never will. I know it. But that I should find you here on the first—"

"Hark, if you wish to accuse me—" she began, but Rearden whirled to her.

"God, no, Dagny. I don't! But you shouldn't be seen speaking to him. You shouldn't deal with him in any way. You don't know how I do." He turned to Francisco. "What are you after? Are you hoping to include her among your kind of conquests or—"

"No! It was an involuntary cry and it sounded futile, with its passionate sincerity offered—to be rejected—as its only proof.

"No? Then are you here on a matter of business? Are you setting a trap, as you did for me? What sort of double-cross are you preparing for her?"

"My purpose was not . . . a matter of business."

"Then what was it?"

"If you still care to believe me, I can tell you only that it involved no betrayal of any kind."

"Do you think that you may still discuss betrayal, in my presence?"

"I will answer you some day. I cannot answer you now."

from . . .  
didn't . . .  
as n . . .  
his . . .

owing (

be the one to answer,"

n again," said Rearden  
concern you, but there's

your purpose, I said with effort, "haven't

n, his lips barely  
"Is this your way

a greater effort.

"Did you grant it when you held my future in your hands?"  
"You are justified in anything you wish to think of me But since  
doesn't concern Miss Taggart . . would you now permit me to  
ave?"

"No! Do you want to evade it, like all those other cowards? Do  
ou want to escape?"

"I will come anywhere you require any time you wish But I  
ould rather it were not in Miss Taggart's presence"

"Why not? I want it to be in her presence since this is the one  
face you had no right to come I have nothing left to protect from  
ou, you've taken more than the looters can ever take, you've  
estroyed everything you've touched, but here is one thing you're  
not going to touch" He knew that the rigid absence of emotion in  
Francisco's face was the strongest evidence of emotion the evidence  
of some abnormal effort at control—he knew that this was torture  
and that he . . . by a feeling which resem-  
unable to tell

are worse than  
g of that which  
ruption is your  
beyond your

reach, beyond your aspiration or your malice

"You have nothing to fear from me now"

"I want you to learn that you are not to think of her, not to look  
at her, not to approach her Of all men, it's you who re not to appear  
in her presence" He knew that he was driven by a desperate a  
at his own feeling for this man, that the feeling still lived  
was this feeling which he had to outrage and destroy  
your motive, it's from any contact with you that she has  
lected."

"If I gave you my word—" He stopped

Rearden chuckled "I know what they mean your words, your convictions your friendship and your oath by the only woman you ever— He stopped They all knew what this meant, in the same instant that Rearden knew

Francisco closed his eyes

Don't ask him that! The cry was Dagny's

"Is this the woman you love?"

Francisco answered looking at her "Yes"

Rearden's hand rose swept down and slapped Francisco's face.

The scream came from Dagny When she could see again—after an instant that felt as if the blow had struck her own cheek—Francisco's hands were the first thing she saw The hair of t

cles as a tearing pain She saw his convulsed fingers struggling & grow fast to the table's edge she wondered which would be first the wood of the table or the bones of the man and she knew that Rearden's life hung in the balance

When her struggle, only his cheeks dr

It made his f

she was seeing in his eyes the tears which were not there His eyes were brilliant and dry He was looking at Rearden but it was Rearden that he was seeing He looked as if he were facing another presence in the room and as if his glance were saying "If this is what you demand of me then even this is yours, yours to accept and mine to endure, there is no more than this in me to offer you, but let me be proud to know that I can offer so much She saw—with a sin artery beating under the skin of his throat, with a froth of pink the corner of his mouth—the look of an enraptured dedication which was almost a smile and she knew that she was witnessing Francisco d'Anconia's greatest achievement

When she felt herself shaking and heard her own voice it seemed to meet the last echo of her scream in the air of the room—and she realized how brief a moment had passed between Her voice had a savage sound of rising to deliver a blow and it was crying in Rearden

"—to protect me from him? Long before you ever—"

"Don't! Francisco's head jerked to her, the brief snap of his ve

held all of the money at once and the money it was an order

"Within the extent of your knowledge," Francisco said quietly, "you are right."

Neither expecting nor permitting an answer, he turned to leave. He bowed to Dagny, inclining his head in a manner that appeared to be a simple gesture of leave-taking to Rearden, as a gesture of acceptance to her. Then he left.

Rearden stood looking after him, knowing—without context and with absolute certainty—that he would give his life for the power not to have committed the action he had committed.

When he turned to Dagny, his face looked drained, open and eager about the words she had said. He ended in the movement which of the two was unable to speak and she was trying desperately to make them all its own.

"If there's something that must be said, say it. His voice was voiceless."

The sound she made was half-chuckle, half moan—it was not a desire for vengeance, but a desperate sense of justice that drove the burning bitterness of her voice, as she cried consciously throwing her words at his face, "You wanted to know the name of that other man? The man I slept with? The man who had me first? It was Francisco d'Anconia!"

She saw the force of the blow by seeing his face swept blank. She knew that if justice was her purpose she had achieved it—because his slap was worse than the one he had dealt.

She felt suddenly calm, knowing that her words had had to be said for the sake of all three of them. The despair of a helpless victim left her, she was not a victim any longer, she was one of the contestants, willing to bear the responsibility of action. She stood facing him, waiting for any answer he would choose to give her, feeling almost as if it were her turn to be subjected to violence.

She did not know what form of torture he was enduring or what he saw being wrecked within him and kept himself the only one to see. There was no sign of pain to give her any warning, he looked as if he were just a man who stood still in the middle of a room, making his consciousness absorb a fact that it refused to absorb. Then she noticed that his hands hung

by his sides. . . .

suffering she was able to find, but it told her that that which he left him no power to feel anything else, not even the existence of his own body. She waited, her pity vanishing and becoming respect.

Then she saw his eyes move slowly from her face down the length of her body, and she knew the sort of torture he was now choosing to experience because it was a glance of a nature he could not hide from her. She knew that he was seeing her as she had been at seventeen, he was seeing her with the rival he hated, he was seeing them together as they would be now, a sight he could neither endure nor resist. She saw the protection of control dropping from his face, but

He seized her shoulders, and she felt prepared to accept what would now kill her or beat her into unconsciousness, and in the moment when she felt certain that he had thought of it, she felt her body thrown against him and his mouth falling on hers, more brutally than the act of a beating would have permitted.

She found herself in terror, twisting her body to resist, and in exultation twisting her arms around him, holding him, letting her lips bring blood to his, knowing that she had never wanted him as she did in this moment.

When he threw her down on the couch she knew, to the rhythm of the beat of his body that it was the act of his victory over his rival and of his surrender to him the act of ownership brought in unendurable violence by the thought of the man whom it was defying the act of transforming his hatred for the pleasure that man had known into the intensity of his own pleasure, his conquest of the man by means of her body—she felt Francisco's presence through Pearden's mind she felt as if she were surrendering to both men in that which she had worshipped in both of them, that which they held in common that essence of character which had made of both love for each an act of loyalty to both. She knew also that this was his rebellion against the world around them, against its worship of degradation against the long torment of his wasted days and lifeless struggle—this was what he wished to assert and, alone with her in the half-darkness high in space above a city of ruins, to hold as the last of his property.

Afterwards they lay still, his face on her shoulder. The reflection of a distant electric sign kept beating in faint flashes on the ceiling above her head.

He reached for her hand and slipped her fingers under his face to let his mouth rest against her palm for a moment, so gently that she felt his motive more than his touch.

After a while she got up, she reached for a cigarette, lighted it then held it out to him with a slight, questioning lift of her hand. He nodded still sitting half-stretched on the couch, she placed the cigarette between his lips and lighted another for herself. She felt a great sense of peace between them, and the intimacy of the unimportant gestures underscored the importance of the things they were





Dear Miss Taggart

I have fought it out for three weeks, I did not want to do it, I know how this will hit you and I know every argument you could offer me because I have used them all against myself—but this is to tell you that I am quitting

I cannot work under the terms of Directive 10 289—though not for the reasons its perpetrators intended I know that their abolition of all scientific research does not mean a damn to you or me, and that you would want me to continue But I have to quit, because I do not wish to succeed any longer

I do not wish to work in a world that regards me as a slave I do not wish to be of any value to people If I succeeded in

expropriate the motor And for the sake of that prospect, we have to accept the position of criminals, you and I, and live under the threat of being arrested at any moment at their whim. And this is the thing that I cannot take, even were I able to take all the rest that in order to give them an inestimable benefit, we should be made martyrs to the men who, but for us, could not have conceived of it I might have forgiven the rest, but when I think of this, I say May they be damned, I will see them all die of starvation, myself included, rather than forgive them for this or permit it!

To tell you the full truth, I want to succeed to solve the secret of the motor as much as ever So I shall continue to work on it for my own sole pleasure and for as long as I last. But if I solve it, it will remain my private secret. I will not release it for any commercial use Therefore, I cannot take your money any longer. Unpleasant, so

sion, and I—

I don't know

future For the moment I intend to remain in my job at this Institute But if any of its trustees or receivers should remind me that I am now legally forbidden to cease being a janitor, I will quit

You had given me my greatest chance and if I am now giving you a painful blow perhaps I should ask you to forgive me I think that you love your work as much as I loved mine, so you will know that my decision was not easy to make, but that I had to make it

It is a strange feeling—writing this letter I do not intend to die but I am giving up the world and this feels like the letter of a suicide So I want to say that of all the people I have known, you are the only person I regret leaving behind

Sincerely yours,  
Quentin Daniels

When he looked up from the letter he heard her saying in the typewritten tones her voice

keep ringing!"

"There are no arguments to offer."

"I won't have a chance to tell him! He's gone by now. It was a week ago. I'm sure he's gone. They've got him."

"Who got him?"

"Who?"

ngs attached  
I'll promise  
he succeeds I  
me its secret.

"If we were free

"All I want from him now is that he doesn't give up and vanish like all those others. I don't want to let them get him. If it's not too late—oh God, I don't want them to get him!"

Yes, Operator, keep ringing!"

"What good will it do us even if he continues to work?"

"That's all I'll beg him to do—just to continue. Maybe we'll never get a chance to use the motor in the future. But I want to know what somewhere in the world there's still a great brain at work on a great attempt—and that we still have a chance at a future if that motor is abandoned again, then there's nothing but Starnes' rule ahead of us."

"Yes, I know."

She held the receiver pressed to her ear, her arm stiff with the effort not to tremble. She waited, and he heard in the silence the futile clicking of the unanswered call.

"He's gone," she said. "They got him. A week is much longer than they need. I don't know how they learn when the time is right, but this"—she pointed at the letter—"this was their time and they wouldn't have missed it."

"Who?"

"The destroyer's agents."

"Are you beginning to think that they really exist?"

"Yes."

"Are you serious?"

"I am. I've met one of them."

"Who?"

"I'll tell you later. I don't know who their leader is, but I'm going to find out, one of these days. I'm going to find out. I'll be damned if I let them—"

She broke off on a gasp. He saw the change in her face the moment before he heard the click of a distant receiver being lifted and the sound of a man's voice saying, across the wire, "Hello?"

"Daniels! Is that you? You're alive? You're still there?"

"Why, yes. Is this you, Miss Taggart? What's the matter?"

"I . . . I thought you were gone."  
 "Oh, I'm sorry, I just heard the phone ringing. I was out in the back lot, gathering carrots."  
 "Carrots?" She was laughing with hysterical relief.  
 "I have my own vegetable patch out there. Used to be the Institute's parking lot. Are you calling from New York, Miss Taggart?"  
 "Yes. I just received your letter. Just now I . . . I had been away."  
 "Oh." There was a pause, then he said quietly, "There's really nothing more to be said about it, Miss Taggart."  
 "Tell me, are you going away?"  
 "No."  
 "You're not planning to go?"  
 "No. Where?"  
 "Do you intend to remain at the Institute?"  
 "Yes."  
 "For how long? Indefinitely?"  
 "Yes—as far as I know."  
 "Has anyone approached you?"  
 "About what?"  
 "About leaving."  
 "No. Who?"  
 "Listen, Daniels, I won't try to discuss your letter over the phone. But I must speak to you. I'm coming to see you. I'll get there as fast as I can."  
 "I don't want you to do that, Miss Taggart. I don't want you to go to such an effort, when it's useless."  
 "Give me a chance, won't you? You don't have to promise to change your mind, you don't have to commit yourself to anything—only to give me a hearing. If I want to come, it's my risk, I'm taking it. There are things I want to say to you, I'm asking you only for the chance to say them."  
 "You know that I will always give you that chance, Miss Taggart."  
 "I'm leaving for Utah at once. Tonight. But there's one thing I want you to promise me. Will you promise to wait for me? Will you promise to be there when I arrive?"  
 "Why . . . of course, Miss Taggart. Unless I die or something happens outside my power—but I don't expect it to happen."  
 "Unless you die, you will wait for me no matter what happens?"  
 "Of course."  
 "Do you give me your word that you'll wait?"

"Eddie? Have them hold the Comet for me . . . Yes, tonight's Comet. Give orders to have my car attached, then come here, to my place, at once." She glanced at her watch. "It's eight twelve. I

have an hour to make it. I don't think I'll hold them up too long  
I'll talk to you while I pack."

She hung up and turned to Rearden.

"Tonight?" he said.

"I have to."

"I guess so. Don't you have to go to Colorado, anyway?"

"Yes. I intended to leave tomorrow night. But I think Eddie can manage to take care of my office, and I'd better start now. It takes three days"—she remembered—"it will now take five days to reach Utah. I have to go by train, there are people I have to see on the line—this can't be delayed, either."

"How long will you stay in Colorado?"

"Hard to tell."

"Wire me when you get there, will you? If it looks as if it's going to be long, I'll join you there."

This was the only expression he could give to the words he had

known, by a faint, solemn stress in the tone of his voice, that it was his acceptance of her confession, his surrender, his forgive-  
ness. She asked, "Can you leave the mills?"

"It will take me a few days to arrange, but I can."

He knew what her words were admitting, acknowledging and giving him, when she said, "Hank, why don't you meet me in Colorado in a week? If you fly your plane, we'll both get there at the same time. And then we'll come back together."

"All right . . . dearest."

She dictated a list of instructions, while pacing her bedroom, gathering her clothes, hastily packing a suitcase Rearden had left. Eddie Willers sat at her dressing table, making notes. He seemed to work in his usual manner of unquestioning efficiency, as if he were

"Hell, yes!—the Comet."

"Okay."

we did

"—when we were building the John Galt Line?" he asked quietly.

"she

Springs It will be all right The hardest thing to find was—

"The men?"

"Yes The men to run the ship. We had to wait West of

the

stood me He wasn't angry He sounded sad But he wouldn't do  
He said one must not try to bring people back out of the gray  
... He wished me luck I think he meant it ... You know, I don't  
think he's one of those that the destroyer knocked out. I think  
just broke by himself"

"Yes I know he did."

Eddie saw the expression on her face and pulled himself  
hastily "Oh, we finally found a man to put in charge ■ Elgin,"  
said, forcing his voice to sound confident. "Don't worry, the tra  
will be built long before you get there"

She smiled a little, but the corners of her mouth were not of a smile, thick  
desperately  
worry!  
his smile

had a touch of embarrassed apology

matter with him he thought it inexcusable that he should have  
discipline slipping just because this was a room, not an office

She went on speaking—and he listened, looking down at his pen  
making a brief notation once in a while He did not permit himself  
to look at her again

She had a look at him, but he was looking down at his pen, and he had

"Send out orders that the Comet is to stop at every division point," she said, "and that all division superintendents are to prepare

he did not hear the own hanging on the own with the white

usuals HK on its breast pocket.

He remembered where he had seen that gown before, he remembered the table in the Wayne-

to he f a so der ore

"I beg your pardon," he said, his voice barely audible, "I want to hear what you said."

"I said I want a report from all superintendents on every foot of rail and every piece of equipment available on their divisions."

"Okay."

"I will confer with each of them in turn. Have them meet me in my car aboard the Comet."

"Okay."

"Send word out—unofficially—that the engineers are to make up time for the stops by going seventy, eighty, a hundred miles an hour, anything they wish as and when they need to, and that I will . . . Eddie?"

"Yes. Okay."

"Eddie, what's the matter?"

He had to look up, to face her and, desperately, to lie for the first time in his life. "I'm . . . I'm afraid of the trouble we'll get into with the law," he said.

"Forget it. Don't you see that there isn't any law left? Anything goes now, for whoever can get away with it—and, for the moment, it's we who're setting the terms."

When she was ready, he carried her suitcase to a taxicab, then down the platform of the Taggart Terminal to her office car, the last at the end of the Comet. He stood on the platform, saw the car jerk forward and watched the red markers on the back of the car slipping slowly away from him into the long darkness of the tunnel. When they were gone, he felt what one feels at the end of a dream one has just after it was lost.

There were few people on the platform around him and they seemed to move with self-conscious strain, as if a sense of disaster clung to the rails and to the girders above their heads. He thought indifferently that after a century of safety, men were once more regarding the departure of a train as an event involving a gamble with death.

He remembered that he had had no dinner, and he felt no desire to eat, but the underground cafeteria of the Taggart Terminal was more truly his home than the empty cube of space he now thought of as his apartment—so he walked to the cafeteria, because he had no other place to go.

The cafeteria was almost deserted—but the first thing he saw as he entered was a thin column of smoke rising from the cigarette of the worker, who sat alone at a table in a dark corner.

Not noticing what he put on his tray, Eddie carried it to the worker's table, said, "Hello," sat down and said nothing else. He looked at the silverware spread before him, wondered about its purpose, remembered the use of a fork and attempted to perform the motions of eating but found that it was beyond his power. After a while, he looked up and saw that the worker's eyes were studying him attentively.

"No," said Eddie, "no, there's nothing the matter with me. Oh yes, a lot has happened but what difference does it make now?"

Yes, she's back. What else do you want me to say about it?

How did you know she's back? Oh well, I suppose the whole company knew it within the first ten minutes. No, I

don't know whether I'm glad that she's back . . . Sure, she'll save the railroad—for another year or month. What do you want

me to say? No, she didn't. She didn't tell me what she's counting on. She . . .

do you see . . .

Only my . . .

talk about . . .

it, stop thinking of her and—of her, I mean."

He remained silent and he wondered why the worker's eyes—the eyes that always seemed to see everything within him—made him feel uneasy tonight. He glanced down at the table, and he noticed the butts of many cigarettes among the remnants of food on the worker's plate.

"Are you in trouble, too?" asked Eddie. "Oh, just that you've sat here for a long time tonight, haven't you? For me? Why

should you have wanted to wait for me? You know, I never

thought you cared whether you saw me or not, me or anybody, you

seemed so complete in yourself, and that's why I liked to talk to

you, because I felt that you always understood, but nothing could

hurt you—you looked as if nothing had ever hurt you—and it made

me feel free, as if . . . as if there were no pain in the world. Do you know what's strange about your face? You look as if you've

never known pain or fear or guilt. . . I'm sorry I'm so late tonight. I had to see her off—she has just left, on the Comet. . . tonight, just now . . . Yes, she's gone . . . Yes, it was a

about, the remnant that she found. Daniels? He's a physicist who's been working for the past year, at the Utah Institute of Technology, trying to solve the secret of the motor and ■■■ rebuild it

Why do you look at me like that? No I haven't told you about him before because it was a secret. It was a private secret project of her own—and of what interest would it have been to you anyway? I guess I can talk about it now, because he's

quit. Yes he told her his reasons. He said that he won't give anything produced by his mind to a world that regards him as a slave. He said that he won't be made a martyr to people in exchange for giving them an inestimable benefit. What—what are you laughing at? Stop it, will you? Why do you laugh like that?

The whole secret? What do you mean the whole secret? He

back again. Not one of them has. No I don't care, not any more we've taken so many losses that I'm getting used to it.

Oh no! It's not Daniels that I can't take it—no drop it. Don't question me about it. The whole world is going to pieces, she's still fighting to

I had no right to

nothing—and pay any attention to myself

Transcontinental as I loved it, that it meant something special to you something personal, and that was why you liked to hear me talk about it. But this—the thing I learned today—this has nothing to do with the railroad. It would be of no importance to you.

Forget it. It's something that I didn't know about her, that's all. I grew up with her. I thought I knew her. I didn't.

I don't know what it was that I expected. I suppose I just thought that she had no private life of any kind. To me she was not a person and

that's

What

at

T



that I wanted to kill him! . . . What's the matter with you tonight? Why do you look at me like that? . . . Oh, what's the matter with all of us? Why is there nothing but misery left for anyone? Why do we suffer so much? We weren't meant to I always thought that we were to be happy, all of us, as our natural fate. What are we doing? What have we lost? A year ago, I wouldn't have damned her for finding something she wanted. But I know that they're doomed, both of them, and so am I, and so is everybody, and she was all I had left. It was so great, to be alive, it was such a wonderful chance. I didn't know that I loved it and that that was our love, hers and mine and yours—but the world is perishing and we cannot stop it. Why are we destroying ourselves? Who will tell us the truth? Who will save us? Oh, who is John Galt? . . . No, it's no use. It doesn't matter now. Why should I feel anything? We won't

## Chapter X THE SIGN OF THE DOLLAR

She sat at the window of the train, her head thrown back, not moving, wishing she would never have to move again.

The telegraph poles went racing past the window, but the train seemed lost in a void, between a brown stretch of prairie and a solid spread of rusty, graying clouds. The twilight was draining the sky without the wound of a sunset, it looked more like the fading of an anemic body in the process of exhausting its last drops of blood and light. The train was going west, as if it, too, were pulled to follow the sinking rays and quietly to vanish from the earth. She sat still, feeling no desire to resist it.

She wished she would not hear the sound of the wheels. They knocked in an even rhythm, every fourth knock accented—and it seemed to her that through the rapid, running clatter of some futile stampede to escape, the beat of the accented knocks was like the steps of an enemy moving toward some inexorable purpose.

She had never experienced it before, this sense of apprehension at the sight of a prairie, this feeling that the rail was only a fragile thread stretched across an enormous emptiness, like a worn nerve ready to break. She had never expected that she, who had felt as if she were the motive power aboard a train, would now sit wishing, like a child or a savage, that this train would move, that it would not stop, that it would get her there on time—wishing it, not like an act of will, but like a plea to a dark unknown.

She thought of what a difference one month had made. She had seen it in the faces of the men at the stations. The track workers, the switchmen, the yardmen who had always greeted her, anywhere along the line, their cheerful grins boasting that they knew who she was—had now looked at her stonily, turning away, their faces wary and closed. She had wanted to cry to them in apology, "It's not I

done it to you!"—then had remembered that she had so-

it and that they now had the right to hate her, that she was slave and a driver of slaves, and so was every human being country, and hatred was the only thing that men could now do to one another

had found reassurance, for two days, in the sight of the cities past her window—the factories, the bridges, the electric the billboards pressing down upon the roofs of homes—the

of energy, in the East, generations ago, had splattered bright  
les to run through the emptiness, some were gone, but some  
lived She was startled when the lights of a small town swept  
ss her car and, vanishing, left it darker than it had been  
re She would not move to turn on the light She sat still, watch-  
the rare towns Whenever an electric beam went flashing briefly  
er face, it was like a moment's greeting.

he saw them as they went by, written on the walls of modest  
shores, over sooted roofs, down slender smokestacks, on the  
ves of tanks Reynolds Harvesters—Macey Cement—Quinlan &  
ms Pressed Alfalfa—Home of the Crawford Mattress—Benjamin  
the Grain and Feed—words raised like flags to the empty dark-  
a of the sky, the motionless forms of movement, of effort, of  
urage, of hope, the monuments to how much had been achieved  
the edge of nature's void by men who had once been free to  
beve—she saw the homes built in scattered privacy, the small  
ops, the wide streets with electric lighting, like a few luminous  
rakes criss-crossed on the black sheet of the wastelands—she saw  
it ghosts between, the remnants of towns, the skeletons of factories  
with crumbling smokestacks, the corpses of shops with broken  
sides, the slanting poles with shreds of wire—she saw a sudden  
glaze, the rare sight of a gas station, a glittering white island of  
dust and metal under the huge black weight of space and sky—she  
aw an ice-cream cone made of radiant tubing, hanging above the  
corner of a street, and a battered car being parked below, with a  
young boy at the wheel and a girl stepping out, her white dress  
blowing in the summer wind—she shuddered for the two of them,  
thinking I can't look at you, I who know what it has taken to give  
you your youth, to give you this evening, this car and the ice-cream  
cone you're going to buy for a quarter—she saw on the edge beyond  
a town, a building glowing with tiers of pale blue light the industrial  
light she loved

man That was twelve years ago Then the owner of the plant died and the heirs who took it over ran it into the ground. Times were bad then but it was since then that things started going to pieces everywhere faster and faster Since then it seems like anywhere I turned—the place cracked and went At first, we thought it was only one state or another A lot of us thought that Colorado would last But it went, too Anything you tried, anything you touched—it fell Anywhere you looked work was stopping—the factories were stopping—the machines were stopping—” he added slowly in a whisper as if seeing some secret terror of his own, *the motors were stopping* His voice rose “Oh God who is— and broke off

“—John Galt?” she asked

“Yes he said and shook his head as if to dispel some vision, “only I don’t like to say that

I don’t either I wish I knew why people are saying it and who started it

“That’s it, ma’am That’s what I’m afraid of It might have been me who started it”

What?

Me or about six thousand others We might have I think we did I hope we were wrong”

What do you mean?

“Well there was something that happened at that plant where I worked for twenty years It was when the old man died and his heirs took over There were three of them two sons and a daughter and they brought a new plan to run the factory They let us vote on it too and everybody—almost everybody—voted for it We didn’t know We thought it was good No that’s not true either We thought that we were supposed to think it was good The plan was that everybody in the factory would work according to his ability but would be paid according to his need We—what’s the matter ma’am? Why do you look like that?

“What was the name of the factory?” she asked her voice barely audible

“The Twentieth Century Motor Company, ma’am of Starnesville Wisconsin”

“Go on”

“We voted for that plan at a big meeting with all of us present, six thousand of us everybody that worked in the factory The Starnes heirs made long speeches about it and it wasn’t too clear but nobody asked any questions None of us knew just how the plan would work but every one of us thought that the next fellow knew it. And if anybody had doubts he felt guilty and kept his mouth shut—because they made it sound like anyone who’d oppose the plan was a child killer at heart and less than a human being They told us that this plan would achieve a noble ideal. Well how were we to know otherwise? Hadn’t we heard it all our lives—from our parents and our schoolteachers and our ministers and in every newspaper we ever read and every movie and every public speech? Hadn’t we always been told that this was righteous

Just? Well, maybe there's some excuse for what we did at the meeting. Still, we voted for the plan—and what we got, well, it's coming to us. You know, ma'am, we are marked men, in a way, those of us who lived through the four years of that damn in the Twentieth Century factory. What is it that hell is supposed to be? Evil—plain, naked, smirking evil, isn't it? Well, it's what we saw and helped to make—and I think we're damned, every one of us, and maybe we'll never be forgiven.

Do you know how it worked, that plan, and what it did to people? Try pouring water into a tank where there's a pipe at the bottom draining it out faster than you pour it, and each bucket you bring breaks that pipe an inch wider, and the harder you

phew! schooling—for the baby next door—for the baby to be run—for anyone anywhere around you—it's theirs to receive, your diapers to dentures—and yours to work, from sunup to sundown, month after month, year after year, with nothing to show for it but your sweat, with nothing in sight for you but their assurance, for the whole of your life, without rest, without hope, without end. . . From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. . .

"We're all one big family, they told us, we're all in this together. But you don't all stand working an acetylene torch ten hours a day—together, and you don't all get a bellyache—together. But whose ability and which of whose needs comes first? When it's all one pot, you can't let any man decide what his own needs are, can you? If you did, he might claim that he needs a yacht—based on his feelings is all you have to go by, he might prove it, so why not? If it's not right for me to own a car until I've worked myself into a hospital ward, earning a car for every loafer and every naked savage on earth—why can't he demand a yacht from me, too, if I still have the ability not to have collapsed? No? He can't? Then why can he demand that I go without cream for my coffee until he's replastered his living room? Oh well. . .

Well, anyway, it was decided that nobody had the right to judge his own need or ability. We voted on it. Yes, ma'am, we voted on it in a public meeting twice a year. How else could it be done? Do you care to think what would happen at such a meeting? It took us just one meeting to discover that we had become beggars—rotten, whining, smelching beggars, all of us, because no man could claim his pay for his work, his earnings, his work for the family, and they owe damn he had on them we

for relief from his needs, like any lousy moocher, listing all his troubles and miseries, down to his patched drawers and his wife's head colds, hoping that 'the family' would throw him some. He had to claim miseries, because it's miseries, not

that had become the coin of the realm—so it turned into a contest among six thousand panhandlers each claiming that *his* need was worse than his brother's. How else could it be done? Do you care to guess what happened what sort of men kept quiet, feeling shame and what sort got away with the jackpot?

"But that wasn't at the same meet per cent in that hadn't delivered tell it? The family voted on that, too. They voted which men were the best and these men were sentenced to work overtime each night for the next six months. Overtime without pay—because you weren't paid by time and you weren't paid by work, only by need.

Do I have to tell you what happened after that—and into what sort of creatures we all started turning we who had once been human? We began to hide whatever ability we had to slow down and watch like hawks that we never worked any faster or better than the next fellow. What else could we do, when we knew that if we did our best for the family it's not thanks or rewards that we'd get but punishment? We knew that for every stinker who'd ruin a batch of motors and cost the company money—either through his sloppiness because he didn't have to care or through plain incompetence—it's we who'd have to pay with our nights and our <sup>eyes</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>brains</sup>.

The noble and full process that saved us thousands of man hours. He gave it to the family, didn't ask anything for it either, couldn't ask, but that was all right with him. It was for the ideal he said. But when he found himself voted as one of our ablest and sentenced to night work because we hadn't gotten enough from him he shut his mouth and his brain. You can bet he didn't come up with any ideas the second year.

"What was it they'd always told us about the vicious competition of the profit system where men had to compete for who'd do a better job than his fellows? Vicious wasn't it? Well they should have seen what it was like when we all had to compete with one another for who'd do the worst job possible. There's no surer way to destroy a man than to force him into a spot where he has to aim at *not* doing his best where he has to struggle to do a bad job day after day. That will finish him quicker than drink or idleness or pulling stunk ups for a living. But there was nothing else for us to do except to fake unfitness. The one accusation we feared was to be suspected of ability. Ability was like a mortgage on you that you could never pay off. And what was there to work for? You knew that your basic pittance would be given to you anyway whether you worked or not—your housing and feeding allowance, it was called—and above that pittance you had no chance to get anything no matter how hard you tried. You couldn't count on

ing a new suit of clothes next year—they might give you a  
thing allowance or they might not, according to whether no-  
birth to more babies  
y then

ise he d  
gradu  
ut the  
They  
to send

everybody's sons to college—and that we first had to send every-  
body's children through high school and we didn't even have  
a knife fight  
secular—

who had  
ever got  
my him  
y didn't

ve him any 'allowance for records—personal luxury,' they called  
. But that same meeting Millie Bush somebody's daughter

music turned to drink, instead. He got so you never saw him  
ully conscious any more. But it seems like there was one thing  
ie couldn't forget. One night he came staggering down the  
street, saw Millie Bush swung his fist and knocked all her teeth  
out. Every one of them.

"Drink of course was what we all turned to some more some-  
less. Don't ask how we got the money for it. When all the decent  
pleasures are forbidden, there's always ways to get the rotten  
ones. You don't break into grocery stores after dark and you don't  
pick your fellows' pockets to buy classical symphonies or fishing  
tackle but if it's to get stinking drunk and forget—you do. Fishing  
tackle? Hunting guns? Snapshot cameras? Hobbies? There wasn't  
any 'amusement allowance' for anybody. Amusement was the first  
thing they dropped. Aren't you always supposed to be ashamed  
to object when anybody asks you to give up anything if it's some-  
thing that gave you pleasure? Even our tobacco allowance was  
cut to where we got two packs of cigarettes a month—and this  
they told us was because the money had to go into the babies'  
milk fund. Babies was the only item of production that didn't fall  
but rose and kept on rising—because people had nothing else to  
do I guess and because they didn't have to care the baby wasn't  
their burden it was 'the family's. In fact the best chance you had  
of getting a raise and breathing easier for a while was a baby al-  
lowance. Either that or a major disease.

"It didn't take us long to see how it all worked out. Any-  
who tried to refuse himself everything

lost his taste for any pleasure, he hated to smoke a nickel's worth of tobacco or chew a stick of gum, worrying whether somebody had more need for that nickel. He felt ashamed of every mouthful of food he swallowed, wondering whose weary nights of overwork had paid for it, knowing that his food was not his by right, miserably wishing to be cheated rather than to cheat, to be a sucker but not a blood sucker. He wouldn't marry, he wouldn't help his folks back home, he wouldn't put an extra burden on 'the family.' Be-

ability allowance' they got more sicknesses than any doctor could disprove, they ruined their clothing, their furniture, their homes—what the hell, 'the family' was paying for it! They found more ways

punished those who observed it—for observing it. The more you tried to live up to it, the more you suffered, the more you cheated it, the bigger reward you got. Your honesty was like a tool left at the mercy of the next man's dishonesty. The honest ones paid the dishonest collected. The honest lost, the dishonest won. How long could men stay good under this sort of a law of goodness? We were a pretty decent bunch of fellows when we started. There weren't many chiselers among us. We knew our jobs and we were proud of it and we worked for the best factory in the country where old man Starnes hired nothing but the pick of the country labor. Within one year under the new plan, there wasn't an honest man left among us. That was the evil, the sort of hell-horned evil that preachers used to scare you with, but you never thought to see alive. Not that the plan encouraged a few bastards, but that it turned decent people into bastards, and there was nothing else that it could do—and it was called a moral ideal!

"What was it we were supposed to want to work for? For the love of our brothers? What brothers? For the bums, the loafers, the moochers we saw all around us? And whether they were cheating or plain incompetent, whether they were unwilling or unable—what difference did it make? They were tied for life to the machine. Could we care? No, we had no way out. We were bound by the machine that was hanging but disabled. It was a trap of whatever was

ever chose to say was whichever's need.

"Love of our brothers? That's when we learned to hate our brothers for the first time in our lives. We began to hate them

very meal they swallowed, for every small pleasure they en-  
 , for one man's new shirt, for another's wife's hat for an  
 —it was taken  
 our hunger  
 h the others  
 at the next  
 —it was taken  
 s family  
 t likely  
 d family  
 time we  
 miserable  
 ant any

a baby  
 used to chip in and help him out with the hospital bills if he  
 pened to be hard pressed for the moment Now, if a baby was  
 n, we didn't speak to the parents for weeks Babies to us, had  
 ome what locusts were to farmers In the old days we used  
 help a man if he had a bad illness in the family Now—well  
 tell you about just one case It was the mother of a man who

A doctor said that she'd have to be sent to a hospital in town for  
 pensive treatments that would take a long time The old lady  
 ed the night before she was to leave for town They never  
 ablished the cause of death No, I don't know whether she was  
 ndered. Nobody said that Nobody would talk about it at all All  
 know is that I—and that's what I can't forget!—I too had  
 ight myself wishing that she would die Thus—may God forgive  
 —was the brotherhood the security, the abundance that the  
 lan was supposed to achieve for us!

"Was there any reason why this sort of horror would ever be  
 reached by anybody? Was there anybody who got any profit  
 rom it? There was The Starnes heirs I hope you're not going  
 o remind me that they'd sacrificed a fortune and turned the  
 actory over to us as a gift. We were fooled by that one too  
 fter, they gave up the factory But profit, ma'am depends on what  
 t is you're after And what the Starnes heirs were after no money  
 on earth for that

that didn't have  
 himself voted as  
 ch didn't do any  
 thing, except that he had a staff for the not doing of anything so  
 he didn't have to bother sticking around the office The pay he got  
 —well, I shouldn't call it 'pay,' none of us was 'paid—the alms  
 voted to him was fairly modest, about ten times what I got, but  
 that wasn't riches Eric didn't care for money—he wouldn't  
 known what to do with it. He spent his time hanging around



us, showing how chummy he was and democratic. He wanted to be loved, it seems. The way he went about it was to keep reminding us that he had given us the factory. We couldn't stand him.

"Gerald Starnes was our Director of Production. We never learned just what the size of his rake-off—his alms—had been. It would have taken a staff of accountants to figure that out, and a staff of engineers to trace the way it was piped, directly or indirectly into his office. None of it was supposed to be for him—it was all for company expenses. Gerald had three cars, four secretaries, five telephones, and he used to throw champagne and caviar parties that no tax-paying tycoon in the country could have afforded. He spent more money in one year than his father had earned in profits in the last two years of his life. We saw a hundred pound stack—a hundred pounds we weighed them—of magazines in Gerald's office, full of stories about our factory and our noble plan, with big pictures of Gerald Starnes, calling him a great social crusader. Gerald liked to come into the shops at night, dressed in his formal clothes, flashing diamond cuff links the size of a nickel and shaking cigar ashes all over. Any cheap show-off who's got nothing to parade but his cash is bad enough—except that he makes no bones about the cash being his, and you're free to gape at him or not, as you wish, and mostly you don't. But when a bastard like Gerald Starnes puts on an act and keeps spouting that he doesn't care for material wealth, that he's only serving 'the family,' that all the lushness is not for himself, but for our sake and for the common good, because it's necessary to keep up the prestige of the company and of the noble plan in the eyes of the public—that's when you learn to hate the creature as you've never hated anything human.

"But his sister Ivy was worse. She really did not care for material wealth. The alms she got was no bigger than ours, and she went about in scuffed, flat heeled shoes and shirtwaists—just to show how selfless she was. She was our Director of Distribution. She was the lady in charge of our needs. She was the one who held us by the throat. Of course, distribution was supposed to be decided by voting—by the voice of the people. But when the people are six thousand howling voices, trying to decide without yardstick, rhyme or reason, when there are no rules to the game and each can demand anything but has a right to nothing, when everybody holds power over everybody's life except his own—then it turns out, as it did, that the voice of the people is Ivy Starnes. By the end of the second year, we dropped the pretense of the 'family meetings'—in the name of 'production efficiency and time economy,' one meeting used to take ten days—and all the petitions of need were simply sent to Miss Starnes' office. No, not sent. They had to be recited to her in person by every petitioner. Then she made up a distribution list, which she read to us for our vote of approval at a meeting that lasted three-quarters of an hour. We voted approval. There was a ten minute period on the agenda for discussion and objections. We made no objections. We knew

by that time. Nobody can divide a factory's income among

may, cold and dead And if you ever want to see pure evil, you  
should have seen the way her eyes glinted when she watched some

from ourselves The guff gave us a chance to pass off as virtue something that we'd be ashamed to admit otherwise There wasn't a man young for it who didn't think that under a setup of this kind he'd muscle in on the profits of the men abler than himself There wasn't a man rich and smart enough but that he didn't think that somebody was richer and smarter, and this plan would give him a share of his better's wealth and brain. But while he was thinking that he'd get unearned benefits from the men above, he forgot about the men below who'd get unearned benefits too He forgot about all his inferiors who'd rush to drain him just as he hoped to drain his superiors The worker who liked the idea that his need entitled him to a limousine like his boss's, forgot that every bum and beggar on earth would come howling that *their* need entitled them to an icebox like his own. That was our real motive when we voted—that was the truth of it—but we didn't like to think it, so the less we liked it, the louder we yelled about our love for the common good.

"Well, we got what we asked for By the time we saw what it was that we'd asked for, it was too late We were trapped, with no place to go The best men among us left the factory in the first week of the plan. We lost our best engineers, superintendents, foremen and highest-skilled workers A man of self respect turned into a milch cow for anybody Some able fellows tried to stick it out, but they couldn't take it for long We kept our men, they kept coming from the factory like from a

hole—till we had nothing left except the men of need, but not of the men of ability

"And the few of us who were still any good, but stayed on, were only those who had been there too long. In the old days, nobody ever quit the Twentieth Century—and, somehow, we couldn't make ourselves believe that it was gone. After a while, we couldn't go because no other employer would have us—for which I can't blame him. Nobody would deal with us in any way, no respectable person or firm. All the small shops, where we traded, started moving out of Starnesville fast—till we had nothing left but saloon gambling joints and crooks who sold us trash and gouging prices. The alms we got kept falling, but the cost of our living went up. The list of the factory's needy kept stretching, but the list of customers shrank. There was less and less income to divide among more and more people. In the old days, it used to be said that the Twentieth Century Motor trademark was as good as the mark on gold. I don't know what it was that the Starnes believed, if they thought at all, but I suppose that like all the planners and like savages, they thought that this trademark was a magic stamp which did the trick by some sort of voodoo power, and that it would keep them rich as it had kept their father rich. When our customers began to see that we never delivered an order on time and never put out a motor that didn't have something wrong with it—the magic stamp began to work the other way around. People wouldn't take a motor as a gift, if it was marked Twentieth Century. And it came to where our only customers were men who never paid and never meant to pay their bills. But General Starnes, doped by his own publicity, got huffy and went about with an air of moral superiority, demanding that businessmen place orders with us not because our motors were good, but because we needed the orders so badly.

"By that time, a village half wit could see what generations of professors had failed to do to a power plant, a defective engine, an operating table.

It did to the passengers of a plane when its motor failed in mid-air. And if they bought our product, not because of its merit, but because of our need, would that be the good, the right thing to do for the owner of that power plant, the surgeon in the hospital, the maker of that plane?

"Yet this was the moral law that the professors and leaders of thinkers had wanted to establish all over the earth. If this is what it did in a single small town where we all knew one another, you care to think what it would do to imagine what it would do when you're tied to the globe? To what you who would rise, with your meats and your clothes and your home and your leisure depending on any swindle, any famine, any pestilence and

here on earth To work—with no chance for an extra ration, till  
■ Cambodians have been fed and the Patagonians have been sent  
rough college To work—on a blank check held by every creature  
orn, by men whom you'll never see, whose needs you'll never  
now, whose ability or laziness or sloppiness or fraud you have  
o way to learn and no right to question—just to work and work  
nd work—and leave it up to the Ivys and the Geraldts of the  
orld to decide whose stomach will consume the effort, the dreams  
nd the days of your life, And *this* is the moral law to accept? *This*  
—a moral ideal?

"Well, we tried it—and we learned. Our agony took four years,  
rom our first meeting ■ our last, and it ended the only way it  
ould end in bankruptcy At our last meeting, Ivy Starnes was  
he one who tried to brazen it out She made a short, nasty, snappy  
idle speech in which she said, that the plan had failed because  
he rest of the country had not accepted it, that a single community  
ould not succeed in the midst of a selfish, greedy world—and  
hat the plan was a noble ideal, but human nature was not good  
nough for it. A young boy—the one who had been punished  
or giving us a useful idea in our first year—got up as we all sat  
ilent, and walked straight to Ivy Starnes on the platform He said  
othing He spat in her face That was the end of the noble plan  
nd of the Twentieth Century."

The man had spoken as if the burden of his years of silence  
had slipped suddenly out of his grasp She knew that this was his  
tribute to her he had shown no reaction to her kindness, he had  
seemed numbed to human value or human hope, but something  
within him had been reached and his response was this confes-  
sion, this long, desperate cry of rebellion against injustice, held  
back for years, but breaking out in recognition of the first person he  
had met in whose hearing an appeal for justice would not be hope-  
less It was as if the life he had been about to renounce were given  
back to him by the two essentials he needed by his food and by  
the presence of a rational being

"But what about John Galt?" she asked

"Oh . . ." he said, remembering "Oh, yes . . ."

"You were going to tell me why people started asking that ques-  
tion"

"Yes . . ." He was looking off, as if at some sight which he  
had studied for years, but which remained unchanged and unsolved,  
his face had an odd, questioning look of terror

"You were going to tell me who was the John Galt they mean—  
if there . . ."

side . . .

st . . .

it . . . I don't know . . . The meeting was held on a spring  
night, twelve years ago The six thousand of us were crowded on  
b teachers built way up to the rafters of the plant's largest hangar.



ant, but they knew too well the feeling that made us cry it. They, I felt that something had gone from the world. Perhaps this was why they began to say it whenever they felt that there was no peace. I'd like to think that I am wrong that those words mean anything, that there's no conscious intention and no avenger behind the ending of the human race. But when I hear them repeating the question I feel afraid. I think of the man who said that he would stop the motor of the world. You see his name was John D.

\* \*

She awakened because the sound of the wheels had changed. It was an irregular beat with sudden screeches and short, sharp rucks—a sound like the broken laughter of hysteria with the fitful

even a bedroom to the tramp and then had remained alone with this story. She had wanted to think of it of all the questions she intended to ask him tomorrow—but she had found her mind frozen and still, like a spectator staring at the story unable to function, only to stare. She had felt as if she knew the meaning of that spectacle knew it with no further questions and had to escape it. To move—had been the words beating in her mind with peculiar urgency—to move—as if movement had become an end in itself crucial absolute and doomed.

Through a thin layer of sleep the sound of the wheels had kept running a race with the growth of her tension. She had kept awakening as in a causeless start of panic finding herself upright in the darkness thinking blankly. What was it?—then telling herself in reassurance. We're moving. We're still moving.

The track of the Kansas Western was worse than she had expected—she thought, listening to the wheels. The train was now carrying her hundreds of miles away from Utah. She had felt a desperate desire to get off the train on the main line abandon all the problems of Taggart Transcontinental find an airplane and fly straight to Quentin Daniels. It had taken a cheerless effort of will to remain in her car.

She lay in the darkness, listening to the wheels thinking that only Daniels and his motor still remained like a point of fire ahead, pulling her forward. Of what use would the motor now be to her? She had no answer. Why did she feel so certain of the desperate need to hurry? She had no answer. To reach him in time was the only ultimatum left in her mind. She held onto it asking no questions. Wordlessly she knew the real answer the motor was needed, not to move trains, but to keep her moving.

She could not hear the beat of the fourth knocks any longer in the jumbled screeching of metal she could not hear the steps of the enemy she was racing only the hopeless stampede of panic.

I'll get there in time, she thought. I'll get there first,

save the motor *There's one motor he's not going to stop she thought* he's not going to stop he's not going to stop

He's not going to stop she thought—awakening with a jolt, jerking her head off the pillow The wheels had stopped.

For a moment she remained still trying to grasp the peculiar stillness around her It felt like the impossible attempt to create a sensory image of non-existence There were no attributes of reality to perceive nothing but the absence no sound as if she were alone on the train—no motion as if this were not a train but a room in a building—no light, as if this were neither train nor room but space without objects—no sign of violence or physical disaster as if this were the state where disaster is no longer possible

In the moment when she grasped the nature of the stillness her body sprang upright with a single curve of motion immediate and violent like a cry of rebellion The loud screech of the window shade went like a knife-cut through the silence as she threw the shade upward There was nothing outside but anonymous stretches of prairie a strong wind was breaking the clouds and a shaft of moonlight fell through but it fell upon plains that seemed as dead as those from which it came

The sweep of her hand pressed the light switch and the bell to summon the porter The electric light came on and brought her back to a rational world She glanced at her watch it was a few minutes past midnight She looked out of the rear window the track went off in a straight line and at the prescribed distance she saw the red lanterns left on the ground placed conscientiously to protect the rear of the train The sight seemed reassuring

She pressed the porter's bell once more She waited She went to the vestibule unlocked the door and leaned out to look down the line of the train A few windows were lighted in the long, tapering band of steel, but she saw no figures no sign of human activity She slammed the door came back and started to dress, her movements suddenly calm and swift

No one came to answer her bell When she hastened across to the next car she felt no fear no uncertainty no despair nothing but the urgency of action

There was no porter in the cubbyhole of the next car no porter in the car beyond She hurried down the narrow passageways meeting no one But a few compartment doors were open The passengers sat inside dressed or half-dressed silently as if waiting They watched her rush by with oddly furtive glances, as if they knew what she was after as if they had expected someone to come and to face what they had not faced She went on running down the spinal cord of a dead train noting the peculiar combination of lighted compartments open doors and empty passages no one had ventured to step out No one had wanted to ask the first question

She ran through the train's only coach where some passengers slept in contorted poses of exhaustion while others awake and still sat hunched like animals waiting for a blow making no move to avert it.

the vestibule of the coach, she stopped. She saw a man, who unlocked the door and was leaning out, looking inquiringly through the darkness, ready to step off. He turned at the sight of her approach. She recognized his face—it was Owen Kellogg, the man who had rejected the future she had once dreamed of.

"Kellogg!" she gasped, the sound of laughter in her voice like a flood of relief at the sudden sight of a man in a desert.

"Hello, Miss Taggart," he answered, with an astonished smile that had a touch of incredulous pleasure—and of wistfulness. "I didn't know you were aboard."

"Come on," she ordered, as if he were still an employee of the road. "I think we're on a frozen train."

"We are," he said, and followed her with prompt, disciplined silence.

No explanations were necessary. It was as if, in unspoken understanding, they were answering a call to duty—and it seemed natural. Of the hundreds aboard, it was the two of them who should have been partners in danger.

"Any idea how long we've been standing?" she asked, as they moved on through the next car.

"No," he said. "We were standing when I woke up."

They went the length of the train finding no porters, no waiters, no diner, no brakemen, no conductor. They glanced at each other once in a while, but kept silent. They knew the stories of abandoned trains, of the crews that vanished in sudden bursts of rebellion against serfdom.

They got off at the end of the train, with no motion around them to save the wind on their faces, and they climbed swiftly aboard the engine. The engine's headlight was on, stretching like an outstretched arm into the void of the night. The engine's cab was empty. Her cry of desperate triumph broke out in answer to the shock of the sight. "Good for them! They're human beings!"

She stopped, aghast, as at the cry of a stranger. She noticed that Kellogg stood watching her curiously, with the faint hint of a smile. It was an old steam engine, the best that the railroad had been able to provide for the Comet. The fire was banked in the grates, the steam gauge was low, and in the great windshield before them a headlight fell upon a band of ties that should have been running and meeting them but lay still instead, like a ladder's steps, counted, lumbered and ended.

She reached for the logbook and looked at the names of the train's last crew. The engineer had been Pat Logan.

Her head dropped slowly, and she closed her eyes. She thought of the first run on a green blue track, that must have been in Pat Logan's mind—as it was now in hers—through the silent hours of a last run on any rail.

"Miss Taggart?" said Owen Kellogg softly.

She jerked her head up. "Yes," she said, "yes. Well"—her face had no color except the metallic tinge of decision—"we'll have to get to a phone and call for another crew." She glanced at



her watch. At the rate we were running I think we must be about eighty miles from the Oklahoma state line. I believe Bradshaw is this road's nearest division point to call. We're somewhere within thirty miles of it.

Are there any Taggart trains following us?

"The next one is Number 253, the transcontinental freight, but it won't get here till about seven A.M., if it's running on time, which I doubt."

Only one freight in seven hours? He said it involuntarily with a note of outraged loyalty to the great railroad he had once been proud to serve.

Her mouth moved in the brief snap of a smile. "Our transcontinental traffic is not what it was in your day."

He nodded slowly. "I don't suppose there are any Kansas Western trains coming tonight either?"

"I can't remember offhand, but I think not."

He glanced in the poles by the side of the track. "I hope that the Kansas Western people have kept their phones in order."

"You mean that the chances are they haven't if we judge by the state of their track. But we'll have to try it."

"Yes."

She turned to go, but stopped. She knew it was useless to comment, but the words came involuntarily. "You know," she said, "it's those lanterns our men put behind the train to protect us that's the hardest thing to take. They—they felt more concern for human lives than their country had shown for theirs."

His swift glance at her was like a shot of deliberate emphasis, then he answered gravely. "Yes, Miss Taggart."

Climbing down the ladder on the side of the engine, they saw a cluster of passengers gathered by the track and more figures emerging from the train to join them. By some special instinct of their own, the men who had sat waiting knew that someone had taken charge, someone had assumed the responsibility, and it was now safe to show signs of life.

They all looked at her with an air of inquiring expectation as she approached. The unnatural pallor of the moonlight seemed to dissolve the differences of their faces and to stress the quality they all had in common—a look of cautious appraisal, part fear, part plea, part impertinence held in abeyance.

"Is there anyone here who wishes to be spokesman for the passengers?" she asked.

They looked at one another. There was no answer.

"Very well," she said. "You don't have to speak. I'm Dagny Taggart, the Operating Vice President of this railroad, and"—there was a rustle of response from the group, half movement, half whisper resembling relief—"and I'll do the speaking. We are on a train that has been abandoned by its crew. There was no physical accident. The engine is intact. But there is no one to run it. This is what the newspapers call a frozen train. You all know what it means—and you know the reasons. Perhaps you knew the reasons long before they were discovered by the men who deserted you."

tought. The law forbade them to desert. But this will not help now."

woman shrieked suddenly, with the demanding petulance of a child. "What are we going to do?"

impotent, borrowed energy.

nightgown, the coat was

under the gown's i

energy which assumes all human self-revelation to be ugliness. It makes no effort to conceal it. For a moment, Dagny regretted the necessity to continue.

"I shall go down the track to a telephone," she continued, her face clear and as cold as the moonlight. "There are emergency telephones at intervals of five miles along the right-of-way. I shall call for another crew to be sent here. This will take some time. You will please stay aboard and maintain such order as you are capable of maintaining."

"What about the gangs of raiders?" asked another woman's nervous voice.

"That's true," said Dagny. "I'd better have someone to accompany me. Who wishes to go?"

She had misunderstood the woman's motive. There was no answer. There were no glances directed at her or at one another. There were no eyes—only moist ovals glistening in the moonlight. There they were, she thought, the men of the new age, the demanders of a quality of anger supposed to spare them the sting of cruelty new to her.

She remained silent by conscious intention.

She noticed that Owen Kellogg, too, was waiting, but he was not watching the passengers, he was watching her face. When he became certain that there would be no answer from the crowd, he said quietly, "I'll go with you, of course, Miss Taggart."

"Thank you."

"What about us?" snapped the nervous woman.

Dagny turned to her, answering in the formal inflectionless monotone of a business executive, "There have been no cases of raider gang attacks upon frozen trains—unfortunately."

"Just where are we?" asked a bulky man with too expensive an overcoat and too flabby a face. His voice had a tone intended for servants by a man unfit to employ them. "In what part of what state?"

"I don't know," she answered.

"How long will we be kept here?" asked another, in the tone of a creditor who is imposed upon by a debtor.

"I don't know."

"When will we get to San Francisco?" asked a third, in the tone of a sheriff addressing a suspect.

"I don't know"

The train was a small crack

where I expect transportation!"

"Keep your mouth shut," said Dagny, "or I'll lock the train doors and leave you where you are."

"You can't do that! You're a common carrier! You have no right to discriminate against me! I'll report it to the Unification Board!"

"—if I give you a train to get you within sight or hearing of your Board," said Dagny, turning away.

She saw Kellogg looking at her, his glance like a line drawn under her words, underscoring them for her own attention.

"Get a flashlight somewhere," she said, "while I go to get my handbag, then we'll start."

When they started out on their way to the track phone, walking  
—her figure descending from  
be recognized the tramp

"Oh. What's to be done?"

"I'm going to a phone to call the division point."

"You can't go alone, ma'am. Not these days. I'd better go with you."

She smiled. "Thanks. But I'll be all right. Mr. Kellogg here is going with me. Say—what's your name?"

"Jeff Allen, ma'am."

"Listen, Allen, have you ever worked for a railroad?"

"No, ma'am."

"Well, you're working for one now. You're deputy-conductor and proxy-vice president in-charge-of-operation. Your job is to take charge of this train in my absence, to preserve order and to keep the cattle from stampeding. Tell them that I appointed you. You don't need any proof. They'll obey anybody who expects obedience."

"Yes, ma'am," he answered firmly, with a look of understanding.

She remembered that money inside a man's pocket had the power to turn into confidence inside his mind, she took a hundred-dollar bill from her bag and slipped it into his hand. "As advance on wages," she said.

"Yes, ma'am."

She had a small, dark, . . .

on

"Who is that?" asked Kellogg.

"A tramp who was caught stealing a ride."

"He'll do the job, I think."

"He will."

They walked silently past the engine and on in the direction of its idling. At first, stepping from tie to tie, with the violent light shining against them from behind, they still felt as if they were home in the normal realm of a railroad. Then she found herself feeling the light on the ties under her feet, watching it ebb away, trying to hold it, to keep seeing its fading glow, until she saw that the hint of a glow on the wood was no longer anything but moonlight. She could not prevent the shudder that made her turn to look back. The headlight still hung behind them, like the red silver globe of a planet, deceptively close, but belonging to another orbit and another system.

Owen Kellogg walked silently beside her, and she felt certain that they knew each other's thoughts.

"He couldn't have. Oh God, he couldn't!" she said suddenly, not realizing that she had switched to words.

"Who?"

"Nathaniel Taggart. He couldn't have worked with people like those passengers. He couldn't have run trains for them. He couldn't

... voice, which was love and pain and indignation, they've said for years that he rose by thwarting the ability of others, by leaving them no chance, and that that human incompetence was to his selfish interest. But he it wasn't obedience that he had."

"Miss

voice,"

—for a

civilized mind. Remember it, when you feel baffled by the nature of his enemies."

"Have you ever heard of a woman named Ivy Starnes?"

"Oh yes."

"I keep thinking that this was what she would have enjoyed—the spectacle of those passengers tonight. This was what she's after. But we—we can't live with it, you and I, can we? No one can live with it. It's not possible to live with it."

"What makes you think that Ivy Starnes's purpose is life?"

Somewhere on the edge of her mind—like the wisps she saw floating on the edges of the prairie, neither quite rays nor fog nor cloud—she felt some shape which she could not grasp, half suggested and demanding to be grasped.

She did not speak, and—like the links of a chain unrolling through their silence—the rhythm of their steps went on, spaced to the ties scored by the dry, swift beat of heels on wood.

She had not had time to be aware of him, except as of a providential comrade in incompetence, now she glanced at him with conscious attention. His face had the clear, hard look she remembered

having liked in the past. But the face had grown calmer, as more serenely at peace. His clothes were threadbare. He wore an old leather jacket, and even in the darkness she could distinguish the scuffed blotches streaking across the leather.

"What have you been doing since you left Taggart Transcontinental?" she asked.

"Oh, many things."

"Where are you working now?"

"On special assignments, more or less."

"Of what kind?"

"Of every kind."

"You're not working for a railroad?"

"No."

The sharp brevity of the sound seemed to expand it into an eloquent statement. She knew that he knew her motive. "Kellogg told you that I don't have a single first-rate man left on the Taggart system, if I offered you any job, any terms, any money I cared to name—would you come back to us?"

"No."

"You were shocked by our loss of traffic. I don't think you have any idea of what our loss of men has done to us. I can't tell you the sort of agony I went through three days ago, trying to find somebody able to build five miles of temporary track. I have fifty miles to build through the Rockies. I see no way to do it. But it has to be done. I've combed the country for men. There aren't any. And then I run into you suddenly, to find you here, in a day when I'd give half the system for one employee like you—do you understand why I can't let you go? Choose anything you want. Want to be general manager of a region? Or assistant operating vice president?"

"No."

"You're still working for a living, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"You don't seem to be making very much."

"I'm making enough for my needs—and for nobody else's."

"Why are you willing to work for anyone but Taggart Transcontinental?"

"Because you are the only one who'd want me."

"I?"

"All right."

"What?"

"Section hand. Engine wiper." He smiled at the look on her face. "No? You see, I said you wouldn't."

"Do you mean that you'd take a day laborer's job?"

"Any time you offered it."

"Why?"

"I don't want to be one of those men who're always looking for a better job."

"What I need is your—"

"—mind, Miss Taggart? My mind is not on the market any more."

She stood looking at him, her face growing harder. "You're one them, aren't you?" she said at last.

"Of whom?"

She did not answer, shrugged and went on.

"Miss Taggart," he asked, "how long will you remain willing to be a common carrier?"

"I won't surrender the world to the creature you're quoting."

"The answer you gave *her* was much more realistic."

The chain of their steps had stretched through many silent miles before she asked, "Why did you stand by me tonight? Why are you willing to help me?"

He answered easily, almost gaily, "Because there isn't a passenger on that train who needs to get where he's going more urgently than *do* if the train can be started, none will profit more than I. But when I need something, I don't sit and expect transportation, like that creature of yours."

"You don't? And—"

"On a 'special assignment'?"

"No. For a month's vacation with some friends."

"A vacation? And it's that important to you?"

"More important than anything on earth."

They had walked two miles when they came to the small gray box on a post by the trackside, which was the emergency telephone. The box hung sideways, beaten by storms. She jerked it open. The telephone was there, a familiar, reassuring object, glinting in the beam of Kellogg's flashlight. But she knew, the moment she pressed the receiver to her ear, and he knew, when he saw her finger tapping sharply against the hook, that the telephone was dead.

She handed the receiver to him without a word. She held the flashlight, while he went swiftly over the instrument, then tore it off the wall.

"The instrument might be—"

"He added, 'The next one is five miles away.'"

"Let's go," she said.

Far behind them, the engine's headlight was still visible, not a planet any longer, but a small star winking through mists of distance. Ahead of them, the rail went off into bluish space, with nothing to mark its end.

She realized how often she had glanced back at that headlight, so long as it remained in sight, she had felt as if a life line were holding them anchored safely. Now they had to break it and dive into— and dive off this planet, she thought. She noticed that Kellogg, too, stood looking back at the headlight.

They glanced at each other, but said nothing. The crunch of a pebble under her shoe sole burst like a firecracker in the silent. With a coldly intentional movement, he kicked the telephone instrument and sent it rolling into a ditch the violence of the noise shattered the vacuum.

"God damn him," he said evenly, not raising his voice, with loathing past any display of emotion. "He probably didn't feel like attending to his job, and since he needed his pay check, nobody had the right to ask that he keep the phones in order."

"Come on," she said.

"We can rest, if you feel tired, Miss Taggart."

"I'm all right. We have no time to feel tired."

"That's our great error, Miss Taggart. We ought to take the time, some day."

She gave a brief chuckle, she stepped onto a tie of the track, stressing the step as her answer, and they went on.

It was hard, walking on ties, but when they tried to walk along the trackside, they found that it was harder. The soil, half-sand, half-dust, sank under their heels, like the soft, unresisting spread of some substance that was neither liquid nor solid. They went back to walking from tie to tie, it was almost like stepping from log to log in the midst of a river.

She thought of what an enormous distance five miles had suddenly become, and that a division point thirty miles away was now unattainable—after an era of railroads built by men who thought in thousands of transcontinental miles. That net of rails and lights spreading from ocean to ocean, hung on the snap of a wire, on a broken connection inside a rusty phone—no, she thought, on something much more powerful and much more delicate. It hung on the connections in the minds of the men who knew that the existence of a wire, of a train, of a job, of themselves and their actions was an absolute not to be escaped. When such minds were gone, a two-thousand-ton train was left at the mercy of the muscles of her legs.

Tired?—she thought, even the strain of walking was a value, a small piece of reality in the stillness around them. The sensation of effort was a specific experience, it was pain and could be nothing else—in the midst of a space which was neither light nor dark, a soul which neither gave nor resisted, a fog which neither moved nor hung still. Their strain was the only evidence of their motion; nothing changed in the emptiness around them, nothing took form to mark their progress. She had always wondered, in incredulous contempt, about the sects that preached the annihilation of the universe as the ideal to be attained. *There*, she thought, was their world and the content of their minds made real.

When the green light of a signal appeared by the track, it gave them a point to reach and pass, but—incongruous in the midst of the floating dissolution—it brought them no sense of relief. It seemed to come from a long since extinguished world, like those stars whose light remains after they are gone. The green circle glowed in space, announcing a clear track, inviting motion where

Glancing  
a man braced  
were the sole  
figures fighting,

roduced a package of cigarettes and extended it to her  
e was about to take a cigarette—then, suddenly, she seized his  
and tore the package out of his hand. It was a plain white

age in her hands. She caught a glimpse of his face—he looked  
the astonished and very amused.  
here was no printing on the package, no trade name, no address,  
the dollar sign stamped in gold. The cigarettes bore the same

"Where did you get this?" she asked.  
He was smiling. "If you know enough to ask that, Miss Taggart,  
should know that I won't answer."

"I know that this stands for something."  
The dollar sign? For a great deal. It stands on the vest of  
ry fat, piglike figure in every cartoon, for the purpose of denoting  
rock, a grafter, a scoundrel—as the one sure fire brand of evil  
hands—as the money of a free country—for achievement, for  
cess, for ability, for man's creative power—and, precisely for  
se reasons it is used as a brand of infamy. It stands stamped  
the forehead of a man like Hank Rearden, as a mark of damna-  
n. Incidentally, do you know where that sign comes from? It  
ads for the

d not move to go, she

YOU KNOW that the United States is the only country in  
story that has ever used its own monogram as a symbol of de-  
avity? Ask yourself why. Ask yourself how long a country that  
d that could hope to exist, and whose moral standards have  
stroyed it. It was the only country in history where wealth was  
at acquired by looting, but by production not by force, but by  
ade, the only country whose money was the symbol of man's  
ight to his own mind, to his work, to his life, to his happiness,  
o himself. If this is evil, by the present standards of the world,  
this is the reason for damning us then we—we, the dollar  
asters and makers—accept it and choose to be damned by that  
world. We choose to wear the sign of the dollar on our foreheads,



proudly as our badge of nobility—the badge we are willing to live for and if need be to die

He extended his hand for the package. She held it as if her fingers would not let it go but gave up and placed it on his palm. With deliberate slowness as if to underscore the meaning of his gesture, he offered her a cigarette. She took it and placed it between her lips. He took one for himself, struck a match, lighted both and they walked on.

They walked over rotting logs that sank without resistance into the shifting ground through a vast uncongealed globe of moonlight and cooling mist—with two spots of living fire in their hands and the glow of two small circles to light their faces.

"Fire, a dangerous force tamed at his fingertips," she remembered the old man saying to her, the old man who had said that these cigarettes were not made anywhere on earth. "When a man thinks there is a spot of fire alive in his mind—and it's proper that he should have the burning point of a cigarette as his one expression."

"I wish you'd tell me who makes them," she said in the tone of a hopeless plea.

He chuckled good-naturedly. "I can tell you this much: they're made by a friend of mine for sale—but not being a common carrier—he sells them only to his friends."

"Sell me that package, will you?"

"I don't think you'll be able to afford it, Miss Taggart, but—all right if you wish."

"How much is it?"

"Five cents."

"Five cents?" she repeated, bewildered.

"Five cents—he said and added, 'in gold.'"

She stopped staring at him. "In gold?"

"Yes, Miss Taggart."

"Well, what's your rate of exchange? How much is it in our normal money?"

"There is no rate of exchange," Miss Taggart said. "No amount of physical—or spiritual—currency whose sole standard of value is the decree of Mr. Wesley Mouch will buy these cigarettes."

"I see."

He reached into his pocket, took out the package and handed it to her. "I'll give them to you, Miss Taggart," he said, "because you've earned them many times over—and because you need them for the same purpose we do."

"What purpose?"

"To remind us—in moments of discouragement, in the loneliness of exile—of our true homeland, which has always been yours too, Miss Taggart."

"Thank you," she said. She put the cigarettes in her pocket. He saw that her hand was trembling.

When they reached the fourth of the five mileposts, they had been silent for a long time with no strength left for anything but the effort of moving their feet. Far ahead they saw a dot of light too low

the horizon and too harshly clear to be a star. They kept watching, as they walked, and said nothing until they became certain it was a powerful electric beacon blazing in the midst of the

to know that the thought was hope  
They found the telephone box at the fifth milepost. The beacon  
ing like a violent spot of cold fire, less than half a mile farther  
uth.

The telephone was working. She heard the buzz of the wire, like  
a breath of a living creature, when she lifted the receiver. Then  
drawing voice answered, "Jessup, at Bradshaw." The voice  
unded sleepy.

"This is Dagny Taggart, speaking from—"

"Who?"

"Dagny Taggart, of Taggart Transcontinental, speaking—"

"Oh . . . Oh yes . . . I see . . . Yes?"

"—speaking from your track phone Number 83. The Comet is  
alled seven miles north of here. It's been abandoned. The crew  
as deserted."

There was a pause. "Well, what do you want me to do about it?"

She had to pause in turn, in order to believe it. "Are you the  
ight dispatcher?"

"Yeah."

"Then send another crew out to us at once."

"A full passenger train crew?"

"Of course."

"How?"

"Yes."

There . . .

about that."

"Listen," she said slowly, fighting for patience, "do you under-  
stand that there's a train, a passenger limited, abandoned in the  
middle of the prairie?"

"Yeah, but how am I to know what I'm supposed to do about  
it? The rules don't provide for it. Now if you had an accident, we'd  
send out the wrecker, but if there was no accident . . . you don't  
need the wrecker, do you?"

"No. We don't need the wrecker. We need men. Do you under-  
stand? Living men to run an engine."

"The rules don't say anything about a train without men. Or  
about men without a train. There's no rule for calling out a full

crew in the middle of the night and sending them to hunt for a  
c to do?"

"My job is to obey the rules. If I send out a crew when I'm not supposed to, God only knows what's going to happen! What with the Unification Board and all the regulations they've got nowadays, who am I to take it upon myself?"

"And what's going to happen if you leave a train stalled on the line?"

"That's not my fault. I had nothing to do with it. They can't blame me. I couldn't help it."

"You're to help it now."

"Nobody told me to."

"I'm telling you to!"

"How do I know whether you're supposed to tell me or not? people were"

aw Kellogg

the Comet

"Oh, sure. But nobody's going to make any trouble about that. No train's ever on schedule these days."

"Then do you intend to leave us blocking your track forever?"

"We've got nothing due till Number 4, the northbound passenger out of Laurel, at eight thirty seven A.M. You can wait till then. The day track dispatcher will be on then. You can speak to him."

"You blasted idiot! This is *the Comet*!"

"What's that to me? This isn't Taggart Transcontinental. You people expect a lot for your money. You've been nothing but a headache to us, with all the extra work at no extra pay for the little fellows." His voice was slipping into whining insolence. "You can't talk to me that way. The time's past when you could talk to people that way."

She had never believed that there were men with whom a certain method, which she had never used, would work, such men were not hired by Taggart Transcontinental and she had never been forced to deal with them before.

"Do you know who I am?" she asked, in the cold, overbearing tone of a personal threat.

It worked. "I . . . I guess so," he answered.

"Then let me tell you that if you don't send a crew in me at once, you'll be out of a job within one hour after I reach Bradshaw, which I'll reach sooner or later. You'd better make it sooner."

"Yes ma'am," he said.

"Call out a full passenger train crew and give them orders."

"Laurel, where we have our own men"  
 "ma'am." He added, "Will you tell headquarters that it was  
 told me to do it?"  
 "ill."  
 "d that it's you who're responsible for it?"  
 "im."  
 "re was a pause, then he asked helplessly "Now how am I  
 to call the men? Most of them haven't got any phones."  
 "you have a call boy?"  
 "s, but he won't get here till morning."  
 "there anybody in the yards right now?"  
 "ere's the wiper in the roundhouse."  
 "nd him out to call the men."  
 "s, ma'am. Hold the line."  
 "e leaned against the side of the phone box, to wait. Kellogg  
 smiling  
 "nd you propose to run a railroad—a transcontinental rail-  
 —with *that*?" he asked.  
 "e shrugged.  
 "e could not keep her eyes off the beacon. It seemed so close  
 ily within her reach. She felt as if the unconfessed thought  
 . . ."

. . . in just a few hours. . . What if there was no need  
 hurry to him? It was what she wanted to do. It was all she  
 ted. . . Her work? What was her work to move on to the  
 st, most exacting use of her mind—or to spend the rest of her  
 doing his thinking for a man unfit to be a night dispatcher?  
 y had she chosen to work? Was it in order to remain where she  
 started—night operator of Rockdale Station—no, lower than  
 she had been better than that dispatcher, even at Rockdale—  
 s this to be the final sum? an end lower than her beginning?  
 ere was no reason to hurry? *She* was the reason. . . They  
 ided the trains, but they did not need the motor? *She* needed  
 motor . . . Her duty? To whom?

The dispatcher was gone for a long time, when he came back,  
 voice sounded sulky "Well, the wiper says he can get the men  
 ight, but it's no use, because how am I going to send them  
 it to you? We have no engine."

"No engine?"

"No. The superintendent took one to run down to Laurel, and  
 e other's in the shops, been there for weeks, and the switch engine  
 mped a rail this morning, they'll be working on her till tomorrow  
 forenoon."

"What about the wrecker's engine that you were offering to  
 nd us?"

"Oh, she's up north. They had a wreck there yesterday. She hasn't  
 come back yet."

"Have you a Diesel car?"

"Never had any such thing Not around here."

"Have you a track motor car?"

"Yes. We have that."

"Send them out on the track motor car."

'Oh Yes ma'am'

"Tell your men to stop here, at track phone Number 83, to pick up Mr Kellogg and myself, she was looking at the beacon.

"Yes, ma'am

"Call the Taggart trainmaster at Laurel, report the Comet's delay and explain to him what happened." She put her hand into her pocket and suddenly clutched her fingers. She felt the package of cigarettes. "Say— she asked, "what's that beacon, about half a mile from here?"

"From where you are? Oh, that must be the emergency landing field of the Flagship Airlines."

"I see Well that's all Get your men started at once. Tell them to pick up Mr Kellogg by track phone Number 111"

"Yes ma'am"

She hung up Keflogg was grinning.

"An airfield, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes. She stood looking at the beacon, her hand still clutching the cigarettes in her pocket."

"So they're going to pick up Mr Kellogg, are they?" She whirled to her feet.

She whirled to him realizing what decision her mind had been reaching without her conscious knowledge "No," she said, "no I didn't mean to abandon you here. It's only that I too have a

1

101

"If there's anything you want to do more urgently than to nurse

Look to your man at Laurel "

"Thank you . . . But if you're hoping . . . I'm not deserting, you know"

"I know"

"Then why are you so eager to help me?"

"I just want you to see what it's like to do something you want, for once."

"There's not much chance that they'll have a plane at that field."

"There's a good chance that they will."

There were two planes on the edge of the airfield one the half charred remnant of a wreck, not worth salvaging for scrap—the other, a Dwight Sanders monoplane, brand new, the kind of ship that men were pleading for, in vain, all over the country. There was one other plane, a single-engine biplane, the kind of ship that men were pleading for, in vain, all over the country.

There was one sleepy attendant at the airfield young, pudgy, and, but for a faint smell of college about his vocabulary, a brain-rotter of the night dispatcher of Bradshaw. He knew nothing about the two planes they had been there when he first took this

b a year ago He had never inquired about them and neither had anybody else In whatever silent crumbling had gone on in the stant headquarters, in the slow dissolution of a great airline company, the Sanders monoplane had been forgotten—as assets of this nature were being forgotten everywhere . . . the model of the motor had been forgotten on a junk pile and, left in plain sight, had conveyed nothing to the inheritors and the takers-over .

There were no rules to tell the young attendant whether he was expected to keep the Sanders plane or not. The decision was made for him by the brusque, confident manner of the two strangers—by the credentials of Miss Dagny Taggart, Vice-President of a railroad—by brief hints about a secret, emergency mission which sounded like Washington to him—by the mention of an agreement with the airline's top officials in New York, whose names he had never heard before—by a check for fifteen thousand dollars, written by Miss Taggart, in deposit against the return of the Sanders plane—and by another check, for two hundred bucks, for his own, personal courtesy.

He fueled the plane, he checked it as best he could, he found a map of the country's airports—and she saw that a landing field on the outskirts of Afton, Utah, was marked as still in existence. She had been too tensely, swiftly active to feel anything, but at the last moment, when the attendant switched on the floodlights, when she was about to climb aboard, she paused to glance at the emptiness of the sky, then at Owen Kellogg. He stood, alone in the white glare, his feet planted firmly apart, on an island of cement in a ring of blinding lights, with nothing beyond the ring but an irredeemable night—and she wondered which one of them was taking the greater chance and facing the more desolate emptiness.

"In case anything happens to me," she said, "will you tell Eddie Wilfers in my office to give Jeff Allen a job as I promised?"

"I will. Is this all you wish to be done in case anything happens?"

She considered it and smiled sadly, in astonishment at the realization. "Yes, I guess that's all. Except, tell Hank Rearden what happened and that I asked you to tell him."

"I will."

She lifted her head and said firmly, "I don't expect it to happen, however. When you reach Laurel, call Winston, Colorado, and tell them that I will be there tomorrow by noon."

"Yes, Miss Taggart."

She wanted to extend her hand in parting but it seemed inadequate, and then she remembered what he had said about times of loneliness. She took out the package and silently offered him one of his own cigarettes. His smile was a full statement of understanding, and the small flame of his match lighting their two cigarettes was their most enduring handshake.

Then she climbed aboard—and the next span of her consciousness was not separate moments and movements, but the sweep of a single motion and a single unit of time, a progression .

entity, like the notes of a piece of music from the touch of her hand on the starter—to the blast of the motor's sound that broke off like a mountain rockslide, all contact with the time behind her—to the circling fall of a blade that vanished in a fragile sparkle of whirling air that cut the space ahead—to the start for the runway—to the brief pause—then to the forward thrust—to the long, perilous run, the run not to be obstructed, the straight line run that gathered power by spending it on a harder and harder and ever accelerating effort, the straight line to a purpose—to the moment, unnoticed when the earth drops off and the line, unbroken, goes on into space in the simple, natural act of rising.

She saw the telegraph wires of the trackside slipping past at the tip of her toes. The earth was falling downward, and she felt as if its weight were dropping off her ankles, as if the globe would be shrinking to the size of a ball, a convict's ball she had dragged and lost. Her body swayed, drunk with the shock of a discovery, and her craft rocked with her body, and it was the earth below that reeled with the rocking of her craft—the discovery that her life was now in her own hands, that there was no necessity to argue, to explain, to teach, to plead, to fight—nothing but to see and think and act. Then the earth steadied into a wide sheet that grew wider and wider as she circled, rising. When she glanced down for the last time the lights of the field were extinguished, there was only the single beacon left and it looked like the tip of Kellogg's cigarette glowing as a last salute in the darkness.

Then she was left with the lights on her instrument panel and the spread of stars beyond her film of glass. There was nothing to support her but the beat of the engine and the minds of the men who had made the plane. But what else supports one anywhere?—she thought.

The line of her course went northwest, to cut a diagonal across the state of Colorado. She knew she had chosen the most dangerous route, over too long a stretch of the worst mountain barrier—but it was the shortest line, and safety lay in altitude, and no mountains seemed dangerous compared to the dispatcher of Bradshaw.

The stars were like foam and the sky seemed full of flowing motion, the motion of bubbles settling and forming, the floating of circular waves without progression. A spark of light flared up on earth once in a while, and it seemed brighter than all the stars blue above. But it hung alone between the black of ashes and the blue of a crypt, it seemed to fight for its fragile foothold, it greeted her and went.

The pale streak of a river came rising slowly from the void, and for a long stretch of time it remained in sight, gliding imperceptibly to meet her. It looked like a phosphorescent vein showing through the skin of the earth, a delicate vein without blood.

When she saw the lights of a town, like a handful of gold coins flung upon the prairie, the brightly violent lights fed by an electric current, they seemed as distant as the stars and now as unattainable. The energy that had lighted them was gone, the power that power stations in empty prairies had vanished, and she

knew of no journey to recapture it. Yet these had been her stars—she thought, looking down—these had been her goal her beacon, the aspiration drawing her upon her upward course That which

had been the height she had wanted to reach, and she wondered how she had come to lose it, who had made of it a convict's ball to drag through muck who had turned its promise of greatness into a vision never to be reached But the town was past and she had to look ahead to the mountains of Colorado rising in her way

The small glass dial on her panel showed that she was now climbing. The sound of the engine, beating through the metal shell around her, trembling in the wheel against her palms like the pounding of a heart strained to a solemn effort told her of the power carrying her above the peaks The earth was now a crumpled sculpture that swayed from side to side the shape of an explosion

her downward, she fought the sudden gusts that tipped the earth as if she were about to roll off into the sky with half of the mountains rolling after It was like fighting a frozen ocean where the touch of a single spray would be fatal

There were stretches of rest when the mountains shrank down over valleys filled with fog Then the fog rose higher to swallow the earth and she was left suspended in space left motionless but for the sound of the engine

But she did not need to see the earth The instrument panel was now her power of sight—it was the condensed sight of the best minds able to guide her on her way Their condensed sight, she thought, offered to her

How milk ment had they received in return? Where were they now? Where was Dwight Sanders? Where was the inventor of her motor?

The first of fir- as a lone) was and

She was coming close to her goal. Somewhere behind her, in the northeast, stood the summits pierced by the Taggart Tunnel. The mountains were sliding in a long descent into the steadier soil of Utah. She let her plane slip closer to the earth.

The stars — — — — — but in the bank first that pear ba



light, the first hints of the coming sunrise. They kept appearing and vanishing slowly growing clearer, leaving the sky darker, then breaking it wider apart, like a promise struggling to be fulfilled. She heard a piece of music beating in her mind, one she seldom liked to recall not Halley's Fifth Concerto, but his Fourth, the cry of a tortured struggle, with the chords of its theme breaking through like a distant vision to be reached.

She saw the Afton airport from across a span of miles, first as a square of sparks, then as a sunburst of white rays. It was lighted for a plane about to take off, and she had to wait for her landing. Circling in the outer darkness above the field, she saw the silver body of a plane rising like a phoenix out of the white fire and—in a straight line almost leaving an instant's trail of light to hang in space behind it—going off toward the east.

Then she swept down in its stead, to dive into the luminous funnel of beams—she saw a strip of cement flying at her face, she felt the jolt of the wheels stopping it in time, then the streak of her motion ebbing out and the plane being tamed to the safety of a car, as it taxied smoothly off the runway.

It was a small private airfield, serving the meager traffic of a few industrial concerns still remaining in Afton. She saw a lone attendant hurrying to meet her. She leaped down to the ground the moment the plane stood still, the hours of the flight swept from her mind by the impatience over the stretch of a few more minutes.

"Can I get a car somewhere to drive me to the Institute of Technology all once?" she asked.

The attendant looked at her, puzzled. "Why, yes, I guess so, ma'am. But . . . but what for? There's nobody there."

"Mr. Quentin Daniels is there?"

The attendant shook his head slowly—then jerked his thumb, pointing east to the shrinking tailights of the plane. "There's Mr. Daniels going now."

"What?"

"He just left."

"Left? Why?"

"He went with the man who flew in for him two three hours ago."

"What man?"

"Don't know, never saw him before, but, boy!—he's got a beauty of a ship!"

She was back at the wheel, she was speeding down the runway, she was rising into the air, her plane like a bullet aimed at two sparks of red and green light that were twinkling away in the eastern sky—while she was still repeating, "Oh no, they don't! They don't! They don't! They don't!"

Once and for all—she thought, clutching the wheel as if it were the enemy not to be relinquished, her words like separate explosions with a trail of fire in her mind to link them—once and for all—to meet the destroyer face to face . . . to learn who he is and where he goes in vanish . . . not the motor . . . he is not to carry the motor away into the darkness of his monstrously closed unknown . . . he is not to escape, this time . . .

A band of light was rising in the east and it seemed to come from the earth, as a breath long held and released. In the deep blue above it, the stranger's plane was a single spark changing color and flashing from side to side, like the tip of a pendulum swinging in the darkness, beating time.

The curve of distance made the spark drop closer to the earth, and she pushed her throttle wide open, not to let the spark out of her sight, not to let it touch the horizon and vanish. The light was flowing into the sky, as if drawn from the earth by the stranger's plane. The plane was headed southeast, and she was following it into

earth. The clouds were dropping away in long shreds of smoky blue. She kept her eyes on the stranger's plane as if her glance were a towline pulling her ship. The stranger's plane was now a small black cross, like a shrinking check mark on the glowing sky.

Then she noticed that the clouds were not dropping, that they stood congealed on the edge of the earth—and she realized that the plane was headed toward the mountains of Colorado, that the struggle against the invisible storm lay ahead for her once more. She noted it without emotion, she did not wonder whether her ship or her body had the power to attempt it again. So long as she was able to move, she would move to follow the speck that was fleeing away with the last of her world. She felt nothing but the emptiness left by a fire that had been hatred and anger and the desperate impulse of a fight to the kill these had fused into a single icy streak, the single resolve to follow the stranger, whoever he was, wherever he took her to follow and she added nothing in her mind, but, unstated, what lay at the bottom of the emptiness was and gave her life, if she could take his.

Like an instrument set to automatic control, her body was performing the motions of driving the plane—with the mountains receding in a bluish fog below and the dented peaks rising in her path as smoky formations of a deadlier blue. She noticed that the distance to the stranger's plane had shrunk. He had checked his speed for the dangerous crossing, while she had gone on, unconscious of the danger, with only the muscles of her arms and legs fighting to keep her plane aloft. A brief, tight movement of her lips was as close as she could come to a smile. It was he who was flying her plane for her, she thought, he had given her the power to follow him with a somnambulist's unerring skill.

As if responding of itself to his control, the needle of her altimeter was slowly moving upward. She was rising and she went on rising and she wondered when her breath and her propeller would fail. He was going southeast, toward the highest mountains that obstructed the path of the sun.

It was his plane that was struck by the first sunray. It flashed for an instant, like a burst of white fire, sending rays to shoot

from its wings. The peaks of the mountains came next she saw the sunlight reaching the snow in the crevices, then trickling down the granite sides, it cut violent shadows on the ledges and brought the mountains into the living finality of a form.

They were flying over the wildest stretch of Colorado, uninhabited uninhabitable inaccessible to men on foot or plane. No landing was possible within a radius of a hundred miles she glanced at her fuel gauge she had one half hour left. The stranger was heading straight toward another, higher range. She wondered why he chose a course no air route did or ever would travel. She wished this range were behind her, it was the last effort she could hope to make.

The stranger's plane was suddenly slackening its speed. He was losing altitude just when she had expected him to climb. The granite barrier was rising in his path, moving to meet him, reaching for his wings—but the long smooth line of his motion was sliding down. She could detect no break, no jolt, no sign of mechanical failure. It looked like the even movement of a controlled intention. With a sudden flash of sunlight on its wings, the plane banked into a long curve rays dripping like water from its body—then went into the broad smooth circles of a spiral, as if circling for a landing where no landing was conceivable.

She watched not trying to explain it, not believing what she saw, waiting for the upward thrust that would throw him back on his course. But the easy gliding circles went on dropping, toward a ground she could not see and dared not think of. Like remnants of broken jaws strings of granite dentures stood between her and his, she could not tell what lay at the bottom of his spiral motion. She knew only that it did not look like, but was certain to be, the motion of a suicide.

She saw the sunlight glitter on his wings for an instant. Then, like the body of a man diving chest first and arms outstretched, serenely abandoned to the sweep of the fall, the plane went down and vanished behind the ridges of rock.

She flew on almost waiting for it to reappear, unable to believe that she had witnessed a horrible catastrophe taking place so simply and quietly. She flew on to where the plane had dropped. It seemed to be a valley in a ring of granite walls.

She reached the valley and looked down. There was no possible place for a landing. There was no sign of a plane.

The bottom of the valley looked like a stretch of the earth's crust mangled in the days when the earth was cooling left irretrievable ever since. It was a stretch of rocks ground against one another, with boulders hanging in precarious formations with long dark crevices and a few contorted pine trees growing half horizontally into the air. There was no level piece of soil the size of a handkerchief. There was no place for a plane to hide. There was no remnant of a plane's wreck.

She banked sharply, circling above the valley, dropping down a little. By some trick of light, which she could not explain, the floor of the valley seemed more clearly visible than the rest of the

around her—  
t was a quiet  
of the Rocky  
approach, and,

with the last of her fuel burning away, she was looking for a plane that had never existed, in quest of a destroyer who had vanished as he always vanished, perhaps it was only his vision that had led her here to be destroyed. In the next moment, she shook her head, pressed her mouth tighter and dropped farther

She thought that she could not abandon an incalculable wealth such as the brain of Quentin Daniels on one of those rocks below, if he was still alive and within her reach to help. She had dropped inside the circle of the valley's walls. It was a dangerous job of flying, the space was much too tight, but she went on circling and dropping lower, her life hanging on her eyesight, and her eyesight flashing between two tasks—searching the floor of the valley and watching the granite walls that seemed about to rip her wings.

She knew the danger only as part of the job. It had no personal meaning any longer. The savage thing she felt was almost enjoyment. It was the last rage of a lost battle. No!—she was crying in her mind, crying it to the destroyer, to the world she had left, to the years behind her, to the long progression of defeat—No! . . . No! . . . No! . . .

Her eyes swept past the instrument panel—and then she sat still but for the sound of a gasp. Her altimeter had stood at 11,000 feet the last time she remembered seeing it. Now it stood at 10,000. But the floor of the valley had not changed. It had come no closer. It came . . . down . . .

round in  
descent  
too clear  
and too close from the height, was now too dim and too far. She was looking at the same rocks from the same perspective. They had grown no larger, their shadows had not moved, and the oddly unnatural light still hung over the bottom of the valley.

she went on circling  
she saw the  
aims growing  
the floor of  
ing down a  
well with a bottom never to be reached. The needle moved to 9,500—to 9,300—to 9,000—to 8,700.

It was as if the air  
blinding cold  
her hands off  
ant, when

seized the wheel again, the light was gone, but her ship was spinning. Her ears were humming with silence and her propeller stood

straight before her her motor was dead

She tried to pull for a rise, but the ship was going down—and what she saw flying at her face was not the spread of mangled boulders but the green grass of a field where no field had been before

There was no time to see the rest There was no time to think of explanations There was no time to come out of the spin The earth was a green ceiling coming down upon her a few hundred swiftly shrinking feet away

Flung from side to side like a battered pendulum clinging to the wheel half in her seat half on her knees she fought to pull the ship into a glide for an attempt to make a belly landing while the green ground was whirling about her sweeping above her then below its spiral coils coming closer Her arms pulling at the wheel, with her space violent puny seen hers In a

moments consecration to her love—to her rebellious denial of disaster to her love of life and of the matchless value that was herself—she felt the fiercely proud certainty that she would survive And in answer to the earth that flew to meet her she heard in her mind as her mockery at fate as her cry of defiance the words of the sentence she hated—the words of defeat of despair and of a plea for help

"Oh hell! Who is John Galt?



## Chapter I ATLANTIS

When she opened her eyes, she saw sunlight, green leaves and  
man  
she  
and  
like

words. But of course

She was looking up at the face of a man who knelt by her side, and she knew that in all the years behind her, *this* was what she would have seen—mark of pain more—it was

—yet the face had none of these qualities, it had their final sum—a look of serene innocence

face that had been seen of him was the is faculty of

sight were his best loved tool and its exercise were a limitless, joyous adventure, as if his eyes imparted a superlative value to himself and to the world—to himself for his ability to see, to the world for being a place so eagerly worth seeing. It seemed to her for a moment that she was in the presence of a being who was pure

and his eyes completing the colors, as the one part of the canvas left undimmed and harshly lustrous: his eyes were the deep, dark green of light glinting on metal. He was looking down at her with the faint trace of a smile, it was not a look of discovery, but of familiar contemplation—as if he, too, were seeing the long-expected and the never-doubted.

This was her world she thought, this was the way men were meant to be and to face their existence—and all the rest of it, all the years of ugliness and struggle were only someone's senseless joke. She smiled at him as at a fellow conspirator in relief in deliverance in radiant mockery of all the things she would never have to consider important again. He smiled in answer it was the same smile as her own — if he felt what she felt and knew what she meant.

"We never had to take any of it seriously, did we?" she whispered.

"No, we never had to."

And then, her consciousness returning fully, she realized that this man was a total stranger.

It move  
tried to

"I've known you for many years."

"Have I known you?"

"Yes I think so."

"What is your name?"

"John Galt."

She looked at him not moving.

"Why are you frightened?" he asked.

"Because I believe it."

He smiled, as if grasping a full confession of the meaning she attached to his name. The smile held an adversary's acceptance of a

She knew only that it stood for a man who could slowly have to fill. She could not do it now. This man was so blinding a presence like a spotlight that would not let her see the shapes strewn in the outer darkness.

"Was it you that I was following?" she asked.

"Yes."

She glanced slowly around her. She was lying in the grass of a field at the foot of a granite drop that came down from thousands of feet away in the blue sky. On the other edge of the field some aspens and pines and the glittering leaves of birch trees hid the space at stretched to a distant wall of encircling mountains. Her plane is not shattered—it was there, a few feet away flat on its belly in the grass. There was no other plane in sight, no structures, no sign of human habitation.

"What is this valley?" she asked.

He smiled. "The Taggart Terminal."

"What do you mean?"

"You'll find out."

A dim impulse, like the recoil of an antagonist made her w check on what strength was left to her. She could move her



and legs, she could lift her head, she felt a stabbing pain when she breathed deeply, she saw a thin thread of blood running down her stocking

"Can one get out of this place?" she asked

His voice seemed earnest, but the glint of the metal green eyes was a smile "Actually—no Temporarily—yes"

her  
str  
collapsed against him the instant her feet rested on the ground  
"You can't, Miss Tag"

she thought For  
right to surrender  
yourself to feel . . . When had she experienced it before,  
wondered, there had been a moment when these had been the words  
in her mind but she could not remember it now. She had known  
once—this feeling of certainty, of the final, the reached, the not to  
be questioned . . . and to feel that

her strength . . . Aware with abnormal intensity of the pressure  
his hands against her body, of the gold and copper threads of his  
hair, the shadows of his lashes on the skin of his face a few inches  
away from hers, she wondered dully. Protected, from what? . .  
it's he who was the enemy . . . was he? . . . why? . . . She did not  
know, she could not think of it now It took an effort to remember  
that she had had a goal and a motive a few hours ago She  
forced herself to recapture it

"Did you know that I was following you?" she asked.

"No"

He looked down  
Ti . . .  
He glanced at the sky "Look carefully. Do you see anything  
there?"

She dropped her head back, looking straight into the sky, seeing  
nothing but the peaceful blue of morning After a while she distinguished  
a few faint strips of shimmering air.

"Heat waves," she said

"Refractor rays," he answered "The valley bottom that you saw  
a mountain top eight thousand feet high, five miles away from her"

"A . . . what?"

"A mountain top that no flyer would ever choose for a landing"

at you saw was its reflection projected over this valley "

"How?"

"By the same method as a mirage on a desert an image refracted in a layer of heated air "

"How?"

"By a screen of rays calculated against everything—except a rage such as yours

"What do you mean?"

"I never thought that any plane would attempt to drop within ten hundred feet of the ground. You hit the ray screen. Some of the rays are the kind that kill magnetic motors. Well that's the second time you beat me. I've never been followed, either "

"Why do you keep that screen?"

"Because this place is private property intended to remain as such."

"What is this place?"

"I'll show it to you, now that you're here, Miss Taggart. I'll answer questions after you've seen it."

She remained silent. She noticed that she had asked questions about every subject but not about him. It was as if he were a single note, grasped by her first glance at him like some irreducible solute, like an axiom not to be explained any further as if she knew everything about him by direct perception, and what awaited her now was only the process of identifying her knowledge.

He was carrying her down a narrow trail that went winding to the bottom of the valley. On the slopes around them the tall dark trunks of firs stood immovably straight in masculine simplicity, like sculpture reduced to an essential form and they clashed with the complex, feminine overdetailed lace-work of the birch leaves shimmering in the sun. The leaves let the sunrays fall through to sweep across his hair, across both their faces. She could not see what lay below, beyond the turns of the trail.

Her eyes kept coming back to his face. He glanced down at her once in a while. At first, she looked away as if she had been caught. Then, as if learning it from him, she held his glance whenever he looked at her. She felt and that

own. He was carrying a rounded woman. It was an embrace even though she felt no sure certainty

the fragile The sound rhythm that went past water but

water sound seemed to grow clearer, rising not in her mind but from somewhere among the leaves. The trail turned and in a tearing she saw a small house on a ledge below with a sun on the pane of an open window. In the moment when she

what experience had once made her want to surrender to the immediate present—it had been the night in a dusty coach of the Com-

Yes

When did he write it?

"Why don't you ask him that in person?"

"Is he here?"

"It's he who's playing it. That's his house."

"Oh!"

You'll meet him later. He'll be glad to speak to you. He knows that his works are the only records you like to play, in the evening when you are alone.

How does he know that?"

"I told him."

The look on her face was like a question that would have begun with "How in hell?"—but she saw the look in his eyes and she laughed her laughter giving sound to the meaning of his glance.

She could not question anything she thought, she could not doubt, not now—not with the sound of that music rising triumphantly

valley and the morning sun and—

And then she gasped, because the trail had turned and from the height of an open ledge she saw the town on the floor of the valley.

It was not a town only a cluster of houses scattered at random from the bottom to the rising steps of the mountains that went on rising above their roofs, enclosing them within an abrupt, impassable circle. They were homes small and new, with naked, angular shapes and the glitter of broad windows. Far in the distance, some structures seemed taller and the faint coils of smoke above them suggested an industrial district. But close before her, rising on a slender granite column from a ledge below to the level of her eyes blinding her by its glare dimming the rest, stood a dollar sign three feet tall, made of solid gold. It hung in space above the town, as its coat-of-arms its trademark, its beacon—and it caught the sunrays like some transmitter of energy that sent them in shining blessing to stretch horizontally through the air above the roofs.

"What's that?" she gasped pointing at the sign.

he answer.

"He gave that sign as an anniversary present to the owner of this ace. And then we all adopted it as our particular emblem. We led the idea."

"Aren't you the owner of this place?"

"No," he said, and the fact of the matter and added

trying her down to meet them

She met them when they emerged suddenly from behind a rocky corner a few feet away. The sight of their faces hit her with the abruptness of a collision.

"Well, I'll be goddamned!" said the muscular man whom she did not know, staring at her.

"In whose arms?"

"Why, the inventor of the motor?"

She gasped, closing her eyes, this was one connection she knew she should have made. When she opened her eyes she was looking at Galt. He was smiling faintly, derisively as if he knew fully what his meant to her.

"It would have served you right if you'd broken your neck!" the muscular man snapped at her, with the anger of concern almost of affection. "What a stunt to pull—for a person who'd have been admitted here so eagerly, if she'd chosen to come through the front door!"

"Miss Taggart, may I present Midas Mulligan?" said Galt.

"Oh," she said weakly, and laughed, she had no capacity for astonishment any longer. "Do you suppose I was killed in that crash—and this is some other kind of existence?"

"It is another kind of existence," said Galt. "But as for being killed, doesn't it seem more like the other way around?"

"Oh yes," she whispered, "yes." She smiled at Mulligan.

"Where is the front door?"

"Here," he said, pointing to his forehead.

"I've lost the key," she said simply, without resentment. "I've lost all keys, right now."

"You'll find them. But what in blazes were you doing in that plane?"

"Following."

"Him?" He pointed at Galt.

"Yes."

"You're lucky to be alive! Are you badly hurt?"

"I don't think so."

"You'll have a few questions to answer after they patch you up. He turned brusquely leading the way down to the car then glanced at Galt. Well, what do we do now? There's something we had provided for the first scab."

"The first what?" she asked.

Skip it, said Mulligan, and looked at Galt. "What do we do?"

"It will be my charge," said Galt. "I will be responsible. You're Quentin Daniels."

Oh, he's no problem at all. He needs nothing but to get acquainted with the place. He seems to know all the rest."

"Yes. He had practically gone the whole way by himself." He remembered her watching him in bewilderment and said, "There's one thing I must thank you for, Miss Taggart: you did pay me a compliment when you chose Quentin Daniels as my understudy. He was a plausible one."

"Where is he?" she asked. "Will you tell me what happened?"

Why, Midas met us at the landing field, drove me to my house and took Daniels with him. I was going to join them for breakfast. I was sure I was

"I dreamed that it was one of the only two persons in the whole world whom I'd exempt."

"Who is the other one?" she asked.

"Hank Rearden."

She winced. It was like a sudden blow from another great distance. She wondered why it seemed to her that Galt was watching her so intently and that she saw an instant's change in his too brief defense.

They had come to the car. It was a Hammond convertible sitting down, one of the costliest models, some years old but kept in the shining trim of efficient handling. Galt placed her cautiously in the back seat and held her in the circle of his arm. She felt a stab of pain once in a while but she had no attention to spare for it. She watched the distant houses of the town as Mulligan pressed the starter and the car moved forward as they went past the sign of a dollar and a golden ray hit her eyes sweeping over her forehead.

"Who is the owner of this place?" she asked.

"I am," said Mulligan.

"H"

"H"

"H"

The one who didn't betray him."

"Oh!" she said. "Another connection fell into place. 'Your first pupil?'"

"That's right."

"The second assistant bookkeeper!" she moaned suddenly. "More memory."

"What's that?"

"That's what Dr. Stadler called him. That's what Dr. Stadler told

that by the

house that

stood on a ridge above the valley. She saw a man walking down a path, ahead of them, hastening in the direction of the town. He wore blue denim overalls and carried a lunchbox. There was some-

As the car  
and she jerked  
of the move-  
Don't let him

car "Oh  
gotten that this

Wyatt was running toward them. He had recognized her too. When he saw her, he saw the need she saw the  
n but once

"No," said Galt. "Miss Taggart is a castaway."

"What?"

"Miss Taggart's plane crashed. Didn't you see it?"

"Crashed—here?"

"Yes."

"I heard a plane, but I . . ." His look of bewilderment changed to a smile, regretful, amused and friendly. "I see. Oh, hell, Dagny, it's preposterous!"

She was staring at him helplessly, unable to reconnect the past to the present. And helplessly—as one would say to a dead friend, in a dream, the words one regrets having missed the chance to say in the past—she said, with the memory of a telephone ringing unanswered, almost two years ago, the words she had hoped to say if she ever caught sight of him again. "I . . . I tried to reach you."

He smiled gently. "We've been trying to reach you ever since, Dagny. I'll see you tonight. Don't worry. I won't vanish—and I don't think you will, either."

He waved to the others and went off, swinging his lunchbox. She glanced up as Mulligan started the car and saw Galt's eyes watching her attentively. Her face hardened, as if in open admission of pain and in defiance of the satisfaction it might give him. "All right," she said. "I see what sort of show you want to put me through the shock of witnessing."

But there was neither cruelty nor pity in his face, only the level look of justice. "Our first rule here," Miss Taggart, he answered, "that one must always see for oneself."

send the doctor over" said Mulligan driving off while Galt carried her up the path.

"Your house?" she asked.

He carried her across the sunrises into a small guest room and placed her down on a bed. She noticed a window open upon a long slant of rocky steps and pines going off into the sky. She noticed

super modern skill

He carried her across the sunrises into a small guest room and placed her down on a bed. She noticed a window open upon a long slant of rocky steps and pines going off into the sky. She noticed

But you're not. Don't you name a railroad line after me?"  
Oh! Yes. It was the small jolt of another connection falling into place. "Yes. I— She was looking at the tall figure with the sun a knot in his hair. He was mercilessly

was the figure. Yes. I did. "Then remembering the rest, she added, "But I named it after an enemy."

He smiled. "That's the contradiction you had to resolve sooner or later, Miss Taggart."

It was you, wasn't it? who destroyed my line.

"Why no. It was the contradiction."

She closed her eyes. In a moment she asked, "All those stories I heard about you—which of them were true?"

"All of them."

"Was it you who spread them?"

"No. What for? I never had any wish to be talked about."

"But you do know that you've become a legend?"

"Yes."

"The young inventor of the Twentieth Century Motor Company is the one real version of the legend, isn't it?"

"The one that's concretely real—yes."

She could not say it indifferently. There was a breathless tone and the drop of her voice toward a whisper when she asked, "The motor—the motor I found—it was you who made it?"

"Yes."

She could not prevent the jolt of eagerness that threw her head up. "The secret of transforming energy—" she began and stopped.

"... twelve years ago . . . a splendid idea . . ."  
walked out of a meeting of six thousand murderers—that story is true, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"You told them that you would stop the motor of the world?"

"I have."

"What have you done?"

"I've done *nothing*, Miss Taggart. And that's the whole of my secret."

She looked at him silently for a long moment. He stood waiting, as if he could read her thoughts. "The destroyer—" she said in a tone of wonder and helplessness.

"—the most evil creature that's ever existed," he said in the tone of a quotation, and she recognized her own words, "the man who's draining the brains of the world."

"How thoroughly have you been watching me," she asked, "and for how long?"

It was only an instant's pause; his eyes did not move, but it seemed to her that his glance was stressed, as if in special awareness of her, and she caught the sound of some particular intensity in his voice as he answered quietly, "For years."

She closed her eyes, relaxing and giving up. She felt an odd, light-hearted indifference, as if she suddenly wanted nothing but the comfort of surrendering to helplessness.

The doctor who arrived was a gray-haired man with a mild, thoughtful face and a firmly, unobtrusively confident manner.

"Miss Taggart, may I present Dr. Hendricks?" said Galt.

"Not Dr. Thomas Hendricks?" she gasped with the involuntary naivety of a child, the name belonged to a great surgeon, who had retired and vanished six years ago.

"Yes, of course," said Galt.

Dr. Hendricks smiled at her, in answer. "Midas told me that Miss Taggart has to be treated for shock," he said, "not for the one sustained, but for the ones to come."

"I'll leave you to do it," said Galt, "while I go to the market to get supplies for breakfast."

She was . . . of Dr. Hendricks' work, as he  
-ver seen  
torn the  
-1 patches  
-4 bruises

spread in purple blotches over her body. By the time Dr. Hendricks' swift, competent hands had wound the bandages and the tight lacings of tape, she felt as if her body were an engine checked by an expert mechanic, and no further care was necessary.

"I would advise you to remain in bed, Miss Taggart."

"Oh no! If I'm careful and move slowly, I'll be all right."



"You ought to rest."

"Do you think I can?"

He smiled. "I guess not."

She was dressed by the time Galt came back. Dr. Hendricks gave him an account of her condition, adding "I'll be back to check up tomorrow."

"Thanks," said Galt. "Send the bill to me."

"Certainly not!" she said indignantly. "I will pay it myself."

The two men glanced at each other, in amusement, as at the boast of a beggar.

"We'll discuss that later," said Galt.

Dr. Hendricks left and she tried to stand up limping, catching at the furniture for support. Galt lifted her in his arms, carried her to the kitchen alcove and placed her on a chair by the table set for two.

She noticed that she was hungry, at the sight of the coffee pot  
white

ner head in helplessly bitter amusement with the tramp, she  
thought with a desperate voice pleading for escape from an avenger  
who would not pursue or be found—the avenger who sat facing her  
across the table drinking a glass of orange juice. "I don't know  
it seems centuries and continents away"

I remember your plane circling to land. But that was the one  
and only time when I didn't think of you. I thought you were  
coming by train.

She asked looking straight at him, "How do you want me to  
understand that?"

"What?"

"The one and only time when you didn't think of me."

He held her glance, she saw the faint movement she had noted  
as typical of him, the movement of his proudly intractable mouth  
curving into the hint of a smile. "In any way you wish," he  
answered.

She let a moment pass to underscore her choice by the severity of  
her face, then asked coldly, in the tone of an enemy's accusation,  
"You knew that I was coming for Quentin Daniels?"

"Yes."

"You got him first and fast, in order not to let me reach him? In  
order to beat me—knowing fully what sort of beating that would  
mean for me?"

"Sure."

It was she who looked away and then . . . to look  
the rest of  
toasting I  
kilt who

another profession, his hands moved with the rapid precision of an engineer pulling the levers of a control board. She remembered suddenly where she had seen as expert and preposterous a performance.

"Is that what you learned from Dr Akston?" she asked, pointing at the stove.

"That, among other things."

"Did he teach you to spend your time—*your* time?" she could not keep the shudder of indignation out of her voice—"on this sort of work?"

"I've spent time on work of much lesser importance."

When he put her plate before her, she asked, "Where did you get that food? Do they have a grocery store here?"

"The best one in the world. It's run by Lawrence Hammond."

"What?"

"Lawrence Hammond, of Hammond Cars. The bacon is from the farm of Dwight Sanders—of Sanders Aircraft. The eggs and the butter from Judge Narragansett—of the Superior Court of the State of Illinois."

She looked at her plate, bitterly, almost as if she were afraid to touch it. "It's the best I've ever had. I'll ever eat consider-

octers who'll make you pay for it through year after year and leave you to starve in the end."

After a long silence, she asked simply, almost wistfully, "What is it that you're all doing here?"

"Living."

She had never heard that word sound so real.

"What is your job?" she asked. "Midas Mulligan said that you work here."

"I'm the handy man, I guess."

"The what?"

"I'm on call whenever anything goes wrong with any of the installations—with the power system, for instance."

She looked at him—and suddenly she tore forward, staring at the electric stove, but fell back on her chair, stopped by pain.

He chuckled. "Yes, that's true—but take it easy or Dr Hendricks will order you back to bed."

"The power system . . ." she said, choking. "the power system here . . . it's run by means of your motor?"

"Yes."

"It's the . . ."

at stove. It's just a  
t a hundred times  
hance to see,

"You promised to show me this valley."

"I'll show it to you. But not the power generator."

'Will you take me to see the place now, as soon as we finish?'

'If you wish—and if you're able to move'

'I am'

He got up, went to the telephone and dialed a number, "Hello, Midas? Yes. He did? Yes, she's all right. . . Will you rent me your car for the day? . . . Thanks. At the usual rate—twenty five cents. Can you send it over? . . . Do you happen to have some sort of cane? She'll need it . . . Tonight? Yes, I think so. We will. Thanks."

He hung up. She was staring at him incredulously.

'Did I understand you to say that Mr. Mulligan—who's worth about two hundred million dollars, I believe—is going to charge you twenty five cents for the use of his car?'

'That's right.'

'Good heavens! couldn't he give it to you as a courtesy?'

He sat looking at her for a moment, studying her face, as if deliberately letting her see the amusement in his. "Miss Taggart," he said, "we have no laws in this valley, no rules, no formal organization of any kind. We come here because we want to rest. But we have certain customs which we all observe, because they pertain to the things we need to rest from. So I'll warn you now that there is one word which is forbidden in this valley—the word 'give'."

"I'm sorry," she said. "You're right."

He refilled her cup of coffee and extended a package of cigarettes. She smiled, as she took a cigarette. It bore the sign of the dollar.

"If you're not too tired by evening," he said, "Mulligan has invited us for dinner. He'll have some guests there whom, I think, you'll want to meet."

"Oh, of course! I won't be too tired. I don't think I'll ever feel tired again."

They were finishing breakfast when she saw Mulligan's car stopping in front of the house. The driver leaped out, raced up the path and rushed into the room, not pausing to ring or knock. It took her a moment to realize that the eager, breathless, disheveled young man was Quentin Daniels.

"Miss Taggart," he gasped, "I'm sorry!" The desperate guilt in his voice clashed with the joyous excitement in his face. "I've never broken my word before! There's no excuse for it, I can't ask you to forgive me, and I know that you won't believe it, but the truth is that I—I forgot!"

She glanced at Galt. "I believe you."

"I forgot that I promised to wait. I forgot everything—until a few minutes ago when Mr. Mulligan told me that you'd crashed here in a plane, and then I knew it was my fault, and if anything had happened to you—oh God, are you all right?"

"Yes. Don't worry. Sit down."

"I don't know how one can forget one's word of honor. I don't know what happened to me."

"I do."

"Miss Taggart, I had been working on it for months, on that one particular hypothesis, and the more I worked, the more hopeless it

...  
...  
said he wanted to speak to me and I asked him to wait and went right on. I think I forgot his presence. I don't know how long he stood there watching me, but what I remember is that suddenly his hand reached over, swept all my figures off the blackboard and wrote one brief equation. And then I noticed him! Then I screamed—because it wasn't the full answer to the motor but it was the way to it, a way I hadn't seen, hadn't suspected but I knew where it led! I remember I cried: How could you know it?—and he answered, pointing at a photograph of your motor: I'm the man who made it in the first place! And that's the last I remember. Miss Taggart—I mean the last I remember of my own existence because after that we talked about static electricity and the conversion of energy and the motor."

"We talked physics all the way down here," said Galt.

"Oh, I remember when you asked me whether I'd go with you," said Daniels. "whether I'd be willing to go and never come back and give up everything. Everything? Give up a dead Institute that's crumbling back into the jungle, give up my future as a janitor-slave, huh?"

...  
...  
ould have leaped off a skyscraper just to follow him—and to hear a formula before we hit the pavement.

"I don't blame you," she said, she looked at him with a tinge of jealousy that was almost envy. Besides, you've fulfilled your contract. You've led me to the secret of the motor."

"I'm going to be a janitor here too," said Daniels, grinning. "Mr. Mulligan said he'd give me the job of janitor—at the power plant. And when I learn I'll rise to electrician. Isn't he great—Midas Mulligan? That's what I want to be when I reach his age. I want to make money. I want to make millions. I want to make as much as he did!"

"Daniels!" She laughed, remembering the quiet self-control, the strict precision, the stern logic of the young scientist she had known. "What's the matter with you? Where are you? Do you know what you're saying?"

"I'm here, Miss Taggart—and there's no limit to what's possible here! I'm going to be the greatest electrician in the world and the richest! I'm going to—"

"You're going to go back to Mulligan's house," said Galt. "sleep for twenty-four hours—or I won't let you near the plant."

"Yes, sir," said Daniels meekly.

The sun had trickled down the peals and drawn a circle

ing granite and glittering snow to enclose the valley—when she stepped out of the house. She felt suddenly as if nothing existed beyond that circle, and she wondered at the joyous, proud comfort.

the other, moving her feet by a slow, conscientious effort, walked down to the car like a child learning to walk for the first time.

She sat by Galt's side as he drove, skirting the town, to Mr. Mulligan's house. It stood on a ridge, the largest house of the valley, the only one built two stories high, an odd combination of fortress and pleasure resort, with stout granite walls and broad, open terraces. He stopped to let Daniels off, then drove on up a winding road rising slowly into the mountains.

It was the thought of Mulligan's wealth, the luxurious car and the sight of Galt's hands on the wheel that made her wonder for the first time whether Galt, too, was wealthy. She glanced at his clothes: the gray slacks and white shirt seemed of a quality intended for long wear, the leather of the narrow belt about his waistline was cracked, the watch on his wrist was a precision instrument, made of plain stainless steel. The sole suggestion of luxury was the color of his hair—the strands stirring in the wind like liquid gold and copper.

Abruptly, behind a turn of the road, she saw the green acres of pastures stretching to a distant farmhouse. There were herds of sheep, some horses, the fenced squares of pigpens under the sprawling shade of oaks.

At last she came closer, that it was Dwight Sanders.

"Hello, Miss Taggart," he said, smiling. She looked silently at his rolled shirt sleeves, at his heavy boots, at the herds of cattle. "So that's all that's left of Sanders Aircraft," she said.

"Why, no. There's that excellent monoplane, my best model, which you flattened in the crash."

"Oh, wonder!"

"You."

"I think."

"I can."

These were the words and the tone of confidence that she had not heard for years, this was the manner she had given up expecting—but the start of her smile ended in a bitter chuckle. "How?" she asked. "On a hog farm?"

"Why, no. At Sanders Aircraft."

"Where is it?"

"Where did you think it was? In that building in New Jersey, which Timky Holloway's cousin bought from my bankrupt successors by means of a government loan and a tax suspension? In that building where he produced six planes that never left the ground and eight that did, but crashed with forty passengers each?"

"Where is it, then?"

"Wherever I am"

He pointed across the road. Glancing down through the tops of the pine trees, she saw the concrete rectangle of an airfield on the

"... and, without me, they cannot even produce their own food."

"But you—you have not been designing airplanes, either."

"No, I haven't. And I haven't been manufacturing the Diesel engines I once promised you. Since the time I saw you last, I have designed and manufactured just one new tractor. I mean, *one*—I sold it by hand—no mass production was necessary. But that tractor has cut an eight-hour workday down to four hours on"—the straight line of his arm, extended to point across the valley, moved like a royal scepter, her eyes followed it and she saw the terraced green of hanging gardens on a distant mountainside—"the chicken and dairy farm of Judge Narragansett"—his arm moved slowly to long, flat stretch of — — — — — then to bend

Udas 3.

18 users

Her e

Her eyes went slowly over the curve his arm had traveled, over and over again, long after the arm had dropped, but she said only, "I see."

“New”

you, nsive

"How much?"

"Two hundred dollars."

"Two hundred dollars?" she repeated incredulously. The price seemed much too low.

"In gold, Miss Taggart."

"Oh . . . ! Well where can I buy the gold?"

"You can't," said Galt.

She jerked her head to face him defiantly "No?"

"No. Not where you come from. Your laws forbid it."  
"Yours don't?"

"No"

No.

"Then sell it to me. Choose your own rate of exchange. Name the sum you want—in my money."

"What money? You're penniless, Miss Taggart."

"What?" It was a word that a Taggart heiress could not expect to hear.

"You're penniless in this valley. You own millions of dollars Taggart Transcontinental stock—but it will not buy one pound of bacon from the Sanders hog farm."

"I see."

Galt smiled and turned to Sanders. "Go ahead and fix that place. Miss Taggart will pay for it eventually."

He pressed the starter and drove on, while she sat stuffily staring asking no questions.

A stretch of violent turquoise blue split the cliffs ahead, and the road it took her a second to realize that it was a lake. The motionless water seemed to condense the blue of the sky and the green of the pine-covered mountains into so brilliantly pure a teal that it made the sky look a dimmed pale gray. A streak of white foam came from among the pines and went crashing down the rocks steps to vanish in the placid water. A small granite structure stood by the stream.

Galt stopped the car just as a husky man in overalls stepped to the threshold of the open doorway. It was Dick McNamara, who had once been her best contractor.

"Good day, Miss Taggart!" he said happily. "I'm glad to see you weren't hurt badly."

She inclined her head in silent greeting—it was like a greeting the loss and the pain of the past, to a desolate evening and desperate face of Eddie Willers telling her the news of this man's disappearance—hurt badly? she thought—I was but not in Aloud,

"Used to. But we've grown so much in the past year that I've

a job because he taught that the inhabitants of slums were not men who made this country—and one is a professor of psychology who couldn't get a job because he taught that men are capable of thinking."

"They work for you as plumbers and linemen?"

"You'd be surprised how good they are at it."

"And to whom have they abandoned our colleges?"

"To those who wanted there." He chuckled. "How long ago was it that I betrayed you, Miss Taggart? Not quite three years, was it? It's the John Galt Line that I refused to build for you. Where is your Line now? But my lines have grown, in that time from the couple of miles that Mulligan had built when I took over, to hundreds of miles of pipe and wire, all within the space of this valley."

He saw the swift, involuntary look of eagerness on her face, the look of a competent person's appreciation, he smiled, glanced at her

pon, he answered firmly

This was the root, she thought, of the guiltlessness of his face. He had guessed and named the words she had wanted to spare him, he had rejected a good will that was not based on his values—and in proud certainty of being right, he had made a boast of that which she had intended as an accusation.

Ahead of them, she saw a wooden pier projecting into the water of the lake. A

watch.  
the car  
too sw

On her bare legs, she had dark, disheveled hair and large eyes. Galt waved to her.

"Hello, John! When did you get in?" she called.

"This morning," he answered, smiling and driving on.

Dagny jerked her head to look back and saw the glance with which the young woman stood looking after Galt. And even though hopelessness, serenely accepted, was part of the worship in that glance, she experienced a feeling she had never known before—a stab of jealousy.

"Who is that?" she asked.

"Our best fishwife. She provides the fish for Hammond's grocery market."

"What else is she?"

"You've noticed that there's a 'what else' for every one of us here? She's a writer. The kind of writer who wouldn't be published outside. She believes that when one deals with words, one deals with the mind."

The car turned into a narrow path, climbing steeply into a wilder



chain of pipes pumps and valves climbing like a vine up its narrow ledges but it bore on its crest a huge wooden sign—and the proud violence of the letters announcing their message to an impassable tangle of ferns and pine branches was more characteristic more familiar than the words Wyatt Oil

It was oil that ran in a glittering curve from the mouth of a pipe into a tank at the foot of the wall as the only confession of the

“It was impossible

Ellis Wyatt stood on a ridge watching the glass dial of a gauge imbedded in the rock. He saw the car stopping below and called, “Hi Dagny! Be with you in a minute!

There were two other men working with him a big muscular roughneck at a pump halfway up the wall and a young boy by the tank on the ground. The young boy had blond hair and a face with an unusual purity of form. She felt certain that she knew this face but she could not recall where she had seen it. The boy caught her almost  
“young

“It was the Fifth Concerto by Richard Halley wasn't it?

Sure he answered. But do you think I'd tell that to a scab?”

“A what?”

“What am I paying you for?” asked Ellis Wyatt approaching the boy chuckled daring back and seize the lever he had abandoned for a moment. It's Miss Taggart who couldn't fire you if you loafed on the job. I can

“That's one of the reasons why I quit the railroad Miss Taggart,” said the boy

“Did you know that I stole him from you?” said Wyatt. “He used to be your best brakeman and now he's my best grease monkey but neither one of us is going to hold him permanently.”

“Who is?”

“Richard Halley Music. He's Halley's best pupil.”

She smiled. “I know this is a place where one employs nothing but aristocrats for the loudest kinds of jobs.

“They're all aristocrats that's true,” said Wyatt, “because they know that there's no such thing as a lousy job—only lousy men who don't care to do it.”

The roughneck was watching them from above listening with curiosity. She glanced up at him he looked like a truck driver so she asked, “What were you out to do? A professor of comparative philology I suppose?”

“No ma'am,” he answered. “I was a truck driver.” He added, “But that's not what I wanted to remain.”

Ellis Wyatt was looking at the place around them with a kind of

pathful pride eager for acknowledgment. It was the pride of a host at a formal reception in a drawing room, and the eagerness of an artist at the opening of his show in a gallery. She smiled and asked, pointing at the machinery, "Shale oil?"

"Uh huh."

"That's the process which you were working to develop while you're on earth?" She said it involuntarily and she gasped a little at her own words.

He laughed. "While I was in hell—yes I'm on earth now."

"How much do you produce?"

"Two hundred barrels a day."

A note of sadness came back into her voice. "It's the process by which you once intended to fill five tank trains a day."

"—one gallon of it

is in

but

is as

as a

into

forgetting what that word means, what it feels like? You should give yourself a chance to relearn it."

"You're hidden in a hole in the wilderness," she said bleakly, "and you're producing two hundred barrels of oil, when you could have flooded the world with it."

"What for? To feed the looters?"

"No! To earn the fortune you deserve."

"—the world's wealth but

we can do it

! that's what

"...improve my methods, and every hour I save is an hour added to my life. It used to take me five hours to fill that tank. It now takes three. The two I saved are mine—as pricelessly mine as if I moved my grave two further hours away for every five I've got. It's two hours released from one task to be invested in another—two more hours in which to work to grow to move forward. That's the savings account I'm hoarding. Is there any sort of safety vault that could protect this account in the outside world?"

"But what space do you have for moving forward? Where's your market?"

He chuckled. "Market? I now work for use, not for profit—my use, not the looters' profit. Only those who add to my life, not those who devour it, are my market. Only those who produce, not those who consume, are my market. I deal with the life-

at

at

an added minute, hour or day with the bread I buy from them, and the clothes, the lumber, the metal"—he glanced at Galt—"an added year with every month of electricity I purchase. That's our market and that's how it works for us—but that was not the way it worked in the outer world. Down what drain were they poured out there, our days, our lives and our energy? Into what bottomless, futuristic sewer of the unpaid for? Here, we trade achievements, not failures."

plant fighting upward from under the weight of a rock—a gnarled stem, contorted by an unnatural struggle, with drooping yellow remnants of unformed leaves and a single green shoot thrust forward to the light with the desperate, inadequate

God, now!

"Then don't be astonished by anything you see in this valley!"

a man made motion

"Who's the lumberjack around here?" she asked.

"Ted Nielsen."

The road was relaxing into wider curves and gentler grades, among the softer shapes of hillsides. She saw a rust brown slope patched by the dark, dusty green of a man in

"Hi, Dagny!"

The smiling face that approached her out of the fog was Andrew Stockton's and she saw a grimy hand extended to her with a gesture of confident pride, as if it held all of her moment's vision on its palm.

She clasped the hand. "Hello," she said softly, not knowing whether she was greeting the past or the future. Then she shook her head and added, "How come you're not planting potatoes or making shoes around here? You've actually remained in your own profession."

"Oh Calvin Atwood of the Atwood Light and Power Company of New York City is making the shoes. Besides my profession is one of the oldest and most immediately needed anywhere. Still I had to fight for it. I had to run a competitor, first."

"What?"

He grinned and pointed to the glass door of a sun-flooded room. "There's my ruined competitor," he said.

She saw a young man bent over a long table, working on a complex model for the mold of a drill head. He had the slender powerful hands of a concert pianist and the grim face of a surgeon concentrating on his task.

"He's a sculptor," said Stockton. "When I came here he and his partner had a sort of combination hand forge and repair shop. I opened a real foundry, and took all their customers away from them. The boy couldn't do the kind of job I did—it was only a part-time business for him, anyway—sculpture is his real business—so he came to work for me. He's making more money now, in shorter hours, than he used to make in his own foundry. His partner was a chemist, so he went into agriculture and he's produced a chemical fertilizer that's doubled some of the crops around here—did you mention potatoes?"

"The . . ."

"Su . . ."

then . . .

He'd . . .

production.

"Who's that?"

"Hank Rearden."

"Yes," she whispered. "Oh yes!"

She wondered what had made her say it with such immediate certainty. She felt, simultaneously, that Hank Rearden's presence in this valley was impossible—and that this was his place, peculiarly his, this was the place of his youth, of his start and together place he had been seeking all his life, the land he had reach the goal of his tortured battle. It seemed to her spirals of flame-tinged fog were drawing time into an old

and while a dim thought went floating through her mind like the streamer of an unfollowed sentence To hold an unchanging youth is to reach at the end — — — — —

the broad back of a foreman whose arm made the sweeping gesture of a signal directing some invisible task. He jerked his head to snap an order—she caught a glimpse of his profile—and she brought her

was now dressed in smudged overalls

Hello Miss Taggart I told you we'd soon meet again."

Her head dropped as if in assent and in greeting but her hand bore down heavily upon her cane, for a moment, while she stood reliving their last encounter the tortured hour of waiting, then the gently distant face at the desk and the tinkling of a glass-paneled door closing upon a stranger

It was so brief a moment that two of the men before her could take it only as a greeting—but it was at Galt that she looked when she raised her head and she saw him looking at her as if he knew

with which a man stands before the fact that the truth is the truth.

"I didn't expect it" she said softly, to Danagger "I never expected to see you again."

Danagger was watching her as if she were a promising child he had once discovered and was now affectionately amused to watch. "I know" he said But why are you so shocked?

"I oh it's just that it's preposterous!" She pointed at his clothes

"What's wrong with it?"

"Is this then the end of your road?"

"Hell no! The beginning"

"What are you aiming at?"

"Mining Not coal though Iron."

"Where?"

He shrugged "There's other things to do I've always been slow on time in my life, never on what to use it for"

She glanced at Stockton with curiosity "Aren't you training a man who could become your most dangerous competitor?"

"That's the only sort of men I like to hire Dagny, have you lived

too long among the footers? Have you come to think that one man's ability is a threat to another?"

"Oh no! But I thought I was almost the only one left who didn't think that."

"Any man who's afraid of hiring the best ability he can find, is a cheat who's in a business where he doesn't belong. To me—the foul-

"That's what one must never give up," said Ken Danagger. They had returned to the car and had started down the last, descending curves of the road, when she glanced at Galt and he turned to her at once, as if he had expected it.

"It was you in Danagger's office that day, wasn't it?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Did you know, then, that I was waiting outside?"

"Yes."

"Did you know what it was like, to wait behind that closed door?"

She could not name the nature of the glance with which he looked at her. It was —

of butter for an attractive young woman who stood at the counter her posture light as a show girl's the skirt of her cotton dress swelling faintly in the wind like a dance costume. Dagny smiled involuntarily, even though the man was Lawrence Hammond.

The shops were small one-story structures and as they moved past her she caught familiar names on their signs like the pages of a book riffled by the car's motion. Mulligan's

Store—Atwood Leather Goods—Nielsen Lumber—then the dollar above the door of a small brick factory with

tion Mulligan Tobacco Company. "Who's the Company, besides Midas Mulligan?" she asked. "Dr. Akston," he answered.

There were few passers-by, some men, fewer women, and they walked with purposeful swiftness, as if bound on specific errands. One after another, they stopped at the sight of the car, they waved to Galt and they looked at her with the unastonished curiosity of recognition. "Have I been expected here for a long time?" she asked. "You still are," he answered.

On the edge of the road, she saw a structure made of glass sheets held together by a wooden framework, but for one instant it seemed to her that it was only a frame for the painting of a woman—a tall, fragile woman with pale blond hair and a face of such beauty that it seemed veiled by distance, as if the artist had been merely able to suggest it, not to make it quite real. In the next instant the woman moved her head—and Dagny realized that there were people at the tables inside the structure, that it was a cafeteria, that the woman stood behind the counter, and that she was Kay Ludlow, the movie star who, once seen, could never be forgotten; the star who had

being made—and then she felt that the glass cafeteria was a cleaner use for Kay Ludlow's beauty than a role in a picture glorifying the commonplace for possessing no glory.

The building that came next was a small, squat block of rough granite, sturdy, solid, neatly built, the lines of its rectangular bulk as severely precise as the creases of a formal garment—but she saw, like an instant's ghost, the long streak of a skyscraper rising into the coils of Chicago's fog, the skyscraper that had once borne the sign she now saw written in gold letters above a modest pine wood door: Mulligan Bank.

Galt closed the car while she stepped back as if placing the

Mulligan."

"But . . . on whose authority?"

"That's stated on the coin—on both sides of it."

"What do you use for small change?"

"Mulligan mints that, too, in silver. We don't accept any other currency in this valley. We accept nothing but *objective* values."

She was studying the coins. "This looks like . . . like something from the first morning in the age of my ancestors."

He pointed at the valley. "Yes, doesn't it?"

hand.

"You're not making it easier for me" she said her voice low

"I'm making it as hard as possible"

"Why don't you say it? Why don't you tell me all the things you want me to learn?"

The gesture of her hand as she said behind

Mostly of granite and pine, with a prodigal ingenuity of thought and a tight economy of physical effort. Every house looked as if it had been put up by the labor of one man, no two houses were alike and the only quality they had in common was the stamp of a mind grasping a problem and solving it.

Lawrence Hammond Roger Marsh Ellis Wyatt  
Owen Kellogg Dr Akston."

Two walls of ancient pines their tall straight trunks pressing against the sky above swallowing

was the shock of an unexpected sound built in loneliness cut off from all ties to human existence, it looked like the secret retreat of some great defiance or sorrow. It was the humblest home of the valley a log cabin beaten in dark streaks by the tears of many rain only its great windows withstanding the storms with the shining untouched serenity of glass.

"Whose house is this?"—she caught her breath and jer



As if in deliberate answer to her involuntary movement, Galt stopped the car in front of the house. For a moment, they

cane, she stepped out of the car, then stood erect, facing the  
She looked at the silver crest that had come from a marble palace in Spain to a shack in the Andes to a log cabin in Colorado—the crest of the men who would not submit. The door of the cabin was locked; the sun did not reach into the glazed darkness beyond the windows, and pine branches hung outstretched above the roof like arms spread in protection, in compassion, in solemn blessing. With no sound but the snap of a twig or the ring of a drop falling somewhere in the forest through long stretches of moments, the silence seemed to hold all the pain that had been hidden here, but never given voice. She stood, listening with a gentle, resigned, uncomplaining respect. Let's see who'll do greater honor, you—to Nat Taggart, or I—to Sebastian d'Anconia. Dagny! Help me to remain. To refuse. Even though he's right!

She turned to look at Galt, knowing that he was the man against whom she had had no help to offer. He sat in the wheel of the car, he had not followed her or moved to assist her, as if he had wanted her to acknowledge the past and had respected the privacy of her lonely salute. She noticed that he still sat as she had left him, his forearm leaning against the wheel at the same angle, the fingers of his hand hanging down in the same sculptured position. His eyes were watching her, but that was all she could read in his face that he had watched her intently, without moving.

When she was seated beside him once more, he said, "That was the first man I took away from you."

"How much

the tone of

She inclined her head. She had caught the sound of suffering in the faintest exaggeration of evenness in his voice.

He pressed the starter, the motor's explosion blasted the story contained in the silence, and they drove on.

The path widened a little, streaming toward a pool of sunlight ahead. She saw a brief glitter of wires among the branches, as they drove out into a clearing. An unobtrusive little structure stood against a hillside, on a rising slant of rocky ground. It was a simple cube of granite, the size of a toolshed, it had no windows, no apertures of any kind, only a door of polished steel and a complex set of wire antennae branching out from the roof. Galt was driving past, leaving it unnoticed, when she asked with a sudden start, "What's that?"

She saw the faint break of his smile. "The powerhouse."

"Oh, stop, please!"

He stopped at the foot of the bridge. It was her

She stood looking up at the structure, her consciousness sur-

thought of a superlative achievement of the human mind

competence—then here it was before her, realized with the  
power of an incomparable mind given shape in a net of wires spar-  
king peacefully under a summer sky, drawing an incalculable power  
out of space into the secret interior of a small stone house!

She thought of this structure, half the size of a boxcar, replacing  
the power plants of the country, the enormous conglomerations of  
steel that had been the power of the world, the power of the  
shoulders  
and years  
lift one's

lead from one's task and glance at the sunlight, or an extra pack of  
cigarettes bought with the money saved from one's electric bill, or  
an hour cut from the work-day of every factory using power, or a  
month's journey through the whole, open width of the world, on a  
ticket paid for by one day of one's labor, on a train pulled by the  
power of it.

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achieving one's happiness was the purpose, the salvation and  
meaning of life.

The door of

was a straight, smooth sheet of

steel, softly lustrous and bluish in the sun. Above it, cut in the granite as the only feature of the building's rectangular austerity, there stood an inscription:

I SWEAR BY MY LIFE AND MY LOVE OF IT THAT I  
WILL NEVER LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF ANOTHER  
MAN, NOR ASK ANOTHER MAN TO LIVE FOR MINE.

She turned to Galt. He stood beside her, he had followed her; he had known that this salute was his. She was looking at the inventor of the motor, but what she saw was the easy, casual figure of a workman in his natural setting and function—she noted the uncommon lightness of his posture, a weightless way of standing that showed an expert control of the use of his body—a tall body in simple garments—a thin shirt, light slacks, a belt about a slender waistline—and loose hair made to glitter like metal by the current of a sluggish wind. She looked at him — she had looked at his structure.

Then she knew that the first two sentences they had said to each other still hung between them, filling the silence—that everything said since, had been said over the sound of those words, that he had known it, had held it, had not let her forget it. She was suddenly aware that they were alone, it was an awareness that stressed the fact, permitting no further implication, yet holding the full meaning of the unnamed in that special stress. They were alone in a silent forest at the foot of a structure that looked like an ancient temple—and she knew what rite was the proper form of worship to be offered on an altar of that kind. She felt a sudden pressure at the base of her throat, her head leaned back a little, no more than to feel the faint shift of a current against her hair, but it was as if she were lying back in space, against the wind, conscious of nothing but his legs and the shape of his mouth. He stood watching her, his face still but for the faint movement of his lips as he spoke.

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She let him look at it for a moment, almost as an act of condescending mercy to an adversary struggling to refuel his strength; then she asked, with a note of imperious pride in her voice, pointing at the inscription, "What's that?"

"It's the oath that was taken by every person in this valley, but you."

She said, looking at the words, "This has always been my own rule of living."

"I know it."

"But I don't think that yours is the way to practice it."

"Then you'll have to learn which one of us is wrong."

She walked up to the steel door of the structure with a sudden confidence faintly stressed in the movements of her body, a mere hint of stress, no more than her awareness of the power she held by

of his pain—and she tried, asking no permission, to turn the



unable to think, to react or to struggle, drained of all emotions but one

She did not speak. She did not open her eyes until the car stopped in front of his house.

"You'd better rest," he said, "and go to sleep right now, if you want to attend Mulligan's dinner tonight."

She nodded obediently. She staggered to the house, avoiding his help. She made an effort to tell him, "I'll be all right," then to escape to the safety of her room and last long enough to close the door.

She collapsed, face down, on the bed. It was not the mere fact of physical exhaustion. It was the sudden monomania of a sensation

her unable to desire, only to feel, reducing her to a mere sensation—a static sensation without start or goal. She kept seeing his figure in her mind—his figure as he had stood at the door of the structure—she felt nothing else, no wish, no hope, no estimate of her feeling, no name for it, no relation to herself—there was no entity such as herself, she was not a person, only a function, the function of seeing him, and the sight was its own meaning and purpose, with no further end to reach.

goal—and in the moment when the wheels left the ground, she was asleep.

The floor of the valley was like a pool still reflecting the glow of the sky, but the light was thickening from gold to copper, the shores were fading and the peaks were smoke blue—when they drove to Mulligan's house.

There was no trace of exhaustion left in her bearing and no remnant of violence. She had awakened at sundown, stepping out of her room, she had found Galt waiting, sitting idly motionless in the light of a lamp. He had glanced up at her, she had stood in the doorway, her face composed, her hair smooth, her posture relaxed and confident—she had looked as she would have looked on the threshold of her office in the Taggart Building, but for the slight angle of her body leaning on a cane. He had sat looking at her for a moment, and she had wondered why she had felt certain that this was the image he was seeing—he was seeing the doorway of her office, as if it were a shrine.

Her eyes moved slowly, in greeting from face to face Ellis Wyatt—Ken Danagger—Hugh Akston—Dr Hendricks—Quentin Daniels—Mulligan's voice pronounced the names of the two others 'Richard Halley—Judge Narragansett.' The faint smile on Richard Halley's face seemed to tell her that they had known her lonely evenings by

was Mulligan "This was not the way we expected you to come but—welcome home."

No!—she wanted to answer, but heard herself answering softly, "Thank you"

"Daggy, how many years is it going to take you to learn to be yourself?" It was Fillew who said this to her to a chair grimace and smile and then a "you don't care" that

"We never make assertions Miss Taggart," said Hugh Akston. "That is the moral crime peculiar to our enemies. We do not tell—we show. We do not claim—we prove. It is not your obedience that we seek to win, but your rational conviction. You have seen all the elements of our secret. The conclusion is now yours to draw—we can help you to name it but not to accept it—the sight, the knowledge and the acceptance must be yours"

"I feel as if I know it" she answered simply "and more I do as if I've always known it, but never found it, and now I'm

not afraid to hear it just afraid that it's coming so close"

Akston smiled, "What does this look like to you, Miss Taggart?" He pointed around the room.

He pointed around the room  
 "This?" She laughed suddenly, looking at the faces of the men  
 against the golden sunburst of rays filling the great windows "This  
 looks like You know, I never hoped to see any of you again, I  
 wondered at times how much I'd give for just one more glimpse or  
 one more word—and now—now this is like that dream you imagine  
 in childhood when you think that some day, in heaven, you will see  
 those great departed whom you had not seen on earth and you  
 choose, from all the past centuries, the great men you would like to  
 meet "

"Well, that's one clue to the nature of our secret," said Akston. "Ask yourself whether the dream of heaven and greatness should be left waiting for us in our graves—or whether it should be ours here and now and on this earth."

"I know," she whispered.

"I know," she whispered.  
And if you met those great men in heaven," asked Ken Dan-  
ger, "what would you want to say to them?"

'Just just bello I guess'

"That's not all," said Danaggar. "There's something you'd want to know for the first time."

—too well—and now it's time for you to rest from that burden which none of us should ever have had to carry."

"Shut up" said Midas Mulligan, looking at her bowed head with anxious concern.

But she raised her head, smiling "Thank you," she said to Danaggar

Danaggar  
 "It's a bit of a long time," said Mulligan. "She  
 ever it is"

Daniels to help them. They served it on small silver trays to be placed on the arms of the chairs—and they all sat about the room with the fire of the sky fading in the windows and sparks of electric light glittering in the wine glasses. There was an air of luxury about the room, but it was the luxury of expert simplicity, she noted the costly furniture carefully chosen for comfort, bought somewhere at a time when luxury had still been an art. There were no superfluous objects, but she noticed a small canvas by a great master of the Renaissance worth a fortune, she noticed an Oriental rug of a texture and color that belonged under glass in a museum. This was Mulligan's concept of wealth, she thought—the wealth of selection not of accumulation.

Quentin Daniels sat on the floor, with his tray on his lap, be-

once in a  
her to  
valley  
while

of Dr.  
had stepped back and  
hung it as a spectacle  
her eyes kept coming  
spectacle was of his  
oice and staging, that he had set it in motion long ago, and that  
the others knew it she knew it.

She noticed another person who was intensely aware of Galt's  
while, invol-  
confess the  
him, as if  
nt forward  
ached over  
ible instant  
ion he per-  
rted himself, the only greeting; it was the gesture of a father

was barely aware of her questions, as she spoke in  
her another, but their answers were printing a record in her mind,  
moving sentence by sentence to a goal.

"The Fifth Concerto?" said Richard Halley, in answer to her  
question. "I wrote it ten years ago. We call it the Concerto of  
Deliverance. Thank you for recognizing it from a few notes whistled  
in the night. . . . Yes, I know about that. Yes, since you knew  
my work, you would know, when you heard it, that this Concerto  
and everything I had been struggling to say and reach. It's dedicated  
to him." He pointed to Galt. "Why, no, Miss Taggart, I haven't  
given up more. What makes you think so? I've written more in the  
outside."

Miss Taggart, I have done a . . .  
Hendricks, in answer to her question "I have spent the last six years  
on research. I have discovered a method to protect the blood vessels  
of the brain from that fatal rupture which is known as a brain  
stroke. It will remove from human existence the terrible threat of  
sudden paralysis. . . . No, not a word of my method will be heard  
outside."

"The Fifth Concerto?" said Judge Narragansett. "What"



possible for men to abandon their sight of it, and then it is justice that destroys them. But it is not possible for justice to go out of existence.

destructive horror machine among all the devices of men is not objective law. No, Miss Taggart, my treatise will not be published outside.

"My business, Miss Taggart?" said Midas Mulligan. "My business is blood transfusion—and I'm still doing it. My job is to feed a life fuel into the plants that are capable of growing. But ask Dr. Hendricks whether any amount of blood will save a body that refuses to function, a rotten hulk that expects to exist without effort. My blood bank is gold. Gold is a fuel that will perform wonders, but no fuel can work where there is no motor. No, I haven't given up. I merely got fed up with the job of running a slaughterhouse, where one drains blood out of healthy living beings."

that state of mind.

They all turned to him as if they had been waiting for his voice, and for that word. She heard the empty beat of time within her which was the same as the beat of his.

"Why should this seem so startling? There is only one kind of men who have no such fear."

cover who they are, what they do and what happens when they refuse to function. This is the strike of the men of the mind, Miss Taggart. This is the mind on strike."

She did not move except for the fingers of one hand that moved slowly up her cheek to her temple.

"Through all the ages," he said, "the mind has been regarded as evil, and every form of insult from heretic to materialist to ex-orter—every form of iniquity from exile to disfranchisement to appropriation—every form of torture from sneers to rack to firing squad—have been brought down upon those who assumed the responsibility of looking at the world through the eyes of a living consciousness and performing the crucial act of a rational connection. Yet only to the extent to which—in chains, in dungeons, in hidden corners, in the cells of philosophers, in the shops of traders some men continued to think, only to that extent was humanity able to survive. Through all the centuries of the worship of the endless, whatever stagnation humanity chose to endure, whatever vitality to practice—it was only by the grace of the men who perceived that wheat must have water in order to grow, that stones laid in a curve will form an arch, that two and two makes four that life is not served by torture and life is not fed by destruction—only by the grace of those men did the rest of them learn to experience moments when they caught the spark of being human, and only the sum of such moments permitted them to continue to exist. It was the man of the mind who taught them to bake their bread, to sail their winds to form the sails and to hold the sails into

quietest and most joyous power—and in service to that love of existence he was

humanity worshipped the idol of instinct and the idol of force—the mystics and the kings—the mystics who longed for an irresponsible consciousness and ruled by means of the claim that their dark emotions were superior to reason, that knowledge came in blind causes fits blindly to be followed, not doubted—and the kings who ruled by means of claws and muscles, with conquest as their method and looting as their aim, with a club or a gun as sole sanction of their power. The defenders of man's soul were concerned with his feelings, and the defenders of man's body were concerned with his stomach—but both were united against his mind. Yet no one not the lowest of humans is ever able fully to renounce his brain. No one has ever believed in the irrational what they do believe in is the unjust. Whenever a man denounces the mind it is because his goal is of a nature that he cannot confess. When he

price of any contradiction ■ ■ the victims who made injustice possible. It is the men of reason who made it possible for the rule of the brute to work. They know it, but it is you who don't—and they are counting on you not to know ■ They are counting on you to go on to work to the limit of the inhuman and to feed them while you last—and when you collapse, there will be another victim starting out and feeding them, while struggling to survive—and the span of each succeeding victim will be shorter, and while you'll die to leave them a railroad, your last descendant-in-spirit will die to leave them a loaf of bread. This does not worry the looters of the moment. Their plan—like all the plans of all the royal looters of the past—is only that the loot shall last their lifetime. It has always lasted before because in one generation they could not run out of victims. But this time—it will not last. The victims are on strike. We are on strike against martyrdom—and against the moral code that demands it. We are on strike against those who believe that one man must eat for the sake of another. We are on strike against the morality of cannibals, be it practiced in body or in spirit. We will not deal with men on any terms but ours—and our terms are a moral code which holds that man is an end in himself and not the means to any end of others. We do not seek to force our code upon them. They are free to believe what they please. But, for once, they will have to believe it and to exist—without our help. And, once and for all, they will learn the meaning of their creed. That creed has lasted for centuries solely by the sanction of the victims—by means of the victims' acceptance of punishment for breaking a code impossible to practice. But that code was intended to be broken. It is a code that lives not on those who observe it, but on those who don't.

by kept in existence not by virtue of its saints, but by the grace of  
his nature. We have heard so much about strikes, he said, "and about the de-  
pendence of the world who depends on whom, who supports whom, who is the  
source of wealth, who makes whose livelihood possible and what  
happens in whom when who walks out."

The windows were now sheets of darkness, reflecting the dots of  
lighted cigarettes. He picked a cigarette from a table beside him, and  
in the flare of a match she saw the brief sparkle of gold, the dollar  
sign, between the two words.

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that

are not concerned — — — — — where I learned  
from my —

When this —

fellow this

achieve the destruction of the mind. They grant the enemy's basic  
premise, thus granting the sanction of reason to formal dementia. A  
basic premise is an absolute that permits no co-operation with  
antithesis and tolerates no tolerance. In the same manner and for  
the same reason as a banker may not accept and pass counterfeit  
money, granting it the sanction, honor and prestige of his bank, just  
as he — — — — —

mere —

opher

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ophy except his declared intention to destroy it. He seeks to es-  
cape—by means of denying it—on the power of reason among men.  
He seeks to stamp the mint mark of reason upon the plans of his  
looting masters. He seeks to use the prestige of philosophy to pur-  
chase the enslavement of thought. But that prestige is an account  
which can exist only so long as I am there to sign the checks. Let  
him do it without me. Let him—and those who entrust to him their  
children's minds—have exactly that which they demand: a world of  
intellect alone — — — — —

I would as well fight to my depositors' funds, the demand of him  
who would offer myself that — — — — — I was

in my life. I had watched them grow. I had made my fortune by  
being able to spot a certain kind of man. The kind who never asked  
you for faith, hope and charity, but offered you facts, proof and  
profit. Did you know that? — — — — —

picture, and I saw it so clearly that it changed the looks of every  
thing for me. I saw the bright face and the eyes of young Rearden,  
as he'd been when I'd met him first. I saw him lying at the foot of  
an altar, with his blood running down into the earth—and what  
stood on that altar was Lee Hunsacker, with the mucus-filled eyes,  
when he had — — — — —

She looked at Judge Narragansett "You quit over the same case, didn't you?"

"Yes" said Judge Narragansett "I quit when the court of appeals reversed my ruling. The purpose for which I had chosen my work, was my resolve to be a guardian of justice. But the laws they asked me to enforce made me the executor of the vilest injustice conceivable. I was asked to use force to violate the rights of disarmed men, who came before me to seek my protection for their rights. Litigants obey the verdict of a tribunal solely on the premise that there is an objective rule of conduct, which they both accept. Now I saw that one man was to be bound by it, but the other was not, one was to obey a rule, the other was to assert an arbitrary wish—his *need*—and the law was to stand on the side of the wish. Justice was to consist of upholding the unjustifiable. I quit—because I could not have borne to hear the words "Your Honor" addressed to me by an honest man."

Her eyes moved slowly to Richard Halley, as if she were both pleading and afraid to hear his story. He smiled.

"I would have been as good as dead," said Richard Halley.

Through all those years—except on some nights, when I could neither wait nor believe any longer, when I cried "why?" but found no answer. Then, on the night when they chose to cheer me, I stood before them on the stage of a theater, thinking that this was the moment I had struggled to reach, wishing to feel it, but feeling nothing. I was seeing all the other nights behind me bearing the "why?" which at that time seemed as empty

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thing I had heard being preached to artists—only I had never believed that anyone human could mean it. They seemed to say that they owed me nothing, that their deafness had provided me with a moral goal, that it had been my duty to struggle to suffer to bear—for their sake—whatever sneers, contempt, injustice, torture they chose to inflict upon me, to bear it in order to teach them to enjoy my work, that this was their rightful due and my proper purpose. And then I . . . of the better in spirit, a thing I

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the  
—I

ing from me the admission that *they* were the goal of my music, so that precisely by reason of my achievement, it would not be they who d acknowledge my value, but I who would bow to theirs. It was that night that I took the oath never to let them hear another note of mine. The streets were empty when I left that theater I was the last one to leave—and I saw a man whom I had never seen before waiting for me—

with a faint stress of firmness in her voice, as if she were taking a beating but wished to take it to the end.

"I quit when medicine was placed under State control, some years ago," said Dr. Hendricks. "Do you know what it takes to perform a brain operation? Do you know the kind of skill it demands and the years of passionate, merciless, excruciating devotion that go to acquire that skill? *That* was what I would not place at the disposal of

the conditions of my work, or my choice of patients, or the amount of my reward. I observed that in all the discussions that preceded the enslavement of medicine, men discussed everything—except the desires of the doctors. Men considered only the 'welfare' of the patients with no thought for those who were to provide it. That a doctor should have any right, desire or choice in the matter was regarded as irrelevant selfishness, his is not to choose, they said only 'to serve.' That a man who's willing to work under compulsion is too dangerous a brute to entrust with a job in the stockyards—never occurred to those who proposed to help the sick by making life impossible for the healthy. I have often wondered at the smugness with which people assert their right to enslave me, to control my work, to force my will, to violate my conscience, to stifle my mind—yet what is it that they expect to depend on, when they lie on an operating table under my hands? Their moral code has taught them to believe that it is safe to rely on the virtue of their victims. Well, that is the virtue I have withdrawn. Let them discover the kind of doctors that their system will now produce. Let them discover, in their operating rooms and hospital wards, that it is not safe to place their lives in the hands of

cannibals meal and to do the cooking, besides."

"I discovered," said Ken Danagger, "that the men I was fighting were impotent. The shiftless, the purposeless, the irresponsible, the irrational—it was not I who needed them, it was not theirs to dictate terms to me. It was not mine to obey demands. I quit, to let them discover it, too."

"I quit," said Quentin Daniels, "because, if there are degrees of damnation, the scientist who places his mind in the service of brute force is the longest range murderer on earth."

They were silent for a moment. "You

guilty of  
pted no  
learned guilt, and thus was free to earn and to know my own  
value. Ever since I can remember, I had felt that I would kill the  
man who'd claim that I exist for the sake of his need—and I had  
known that *this* was the highest moral feeling. That night, at the  
Twentieth Century meeting, when I heard an unspeakable evil being  
spoken in a tone of moral righteousness, I saw the root of the  
world's tragedy, the key to it and the solution. I saw what had to  
be done."

"We would ever hear of it again. It was my first experimental  
model. Nobody but me or my equivalent could have been able to  
complete it or even to grasp what it was. And I knew that no equiva  
lent of mine would come near that factory from then on."

"You knew the kind of achievement your motor represented?"

"Yes."

"And you knew you were leaving it to perish?"

"Yes." He looked off into the darkness beyond the windows and  
shooked softly, but it was not a sound of amusement. "I looked at  
my motor for the last time, before I left. I thought of the men who  
claim that wealth is a matter of natural resources—and of the men  
who claim that wealth is a matter of seizing the factories—and of  
the men."

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Since that motor could have rendered to mankind, if it had been  
put into production. I think that on the day when men understand  
the meaning of its fate in that factory's junk heap—it will have  
rendered a greater one."

"Did you expect to see that day, when you left it?"

"No."

"Did you expect a chance to rebuild it elsewhere?"

"No."

"And you were willing to let it remain in a junk heap?"

"For the sake of what that motor meant to me," he said slowly,  
"I had to be willing to let it crumble and vanish forever"—he looked  
straight at her and she heard the steady, unhesitant,  
ruthlessness of his voice—"just as you will have to be willing  
the rail of Taggart Transcontinental crumble and vanish."



She held his eyes, her head was lifted, and she said softly, in the tone of a proudly open plea "Don't make me answer you now."

"I won't. We'll tell you whatever you wish to know. We won't urge you to make a decision." He added, and she was shocked by the sudden gentleness of his voice, "I said that that kind of indifference toward a world which should have been ours was the hardest thing to attain. I know. We've all gone through it."

She looked at the quiet, impregnable room and the light—the light that came from his motor—on the faces of men who were the most serene and confident gathering she had ever attended.

"What did you do when you walked out of the Twentieth Century?" she asked.

"I went out to become a flame-spotter. I made it my job to watch for those bright flares in the growing night of savagery, which were the men of ability, the men of the mind—to watch their course, their struggle and their agony—and to pull them out, when I knew that they had seen enough."

"What did you tell them to make them abandon everything?"

"I told them that they were right."

In answer to the silent question of her glance, he added "I gave them the pride they did not know they had. I gave them the words to identify it. I gave them that priceless possession which they had missed, had longed for yet had not known they needed—a moral sanction. Did you call me the destroyer and the hunter of men? I was the walking delegate of this strike, the leader of the victims' rebellion, the defender of the oppressed, the disinherited, the exploited—and when I use these words, they have, for once, a literal meaning."

"Who were the first to follow you?"

He let a moment pass in deliberate emphasis then answered, "My two best friends. You know one of them. You know, perhaps better than anyone else, what price he paid for it. Our own teacher, Dr. Akston, was next. He joined us within one evening's conversation. William Hastings, who had been my boss in the research laboratory of Twentieth Century Motors, had a hard time, fighting it out with himself. It took him a year. But he joined. Then Richard Halley. Then Midas Mulligan."

"—who took fifteen minutes," said Mulligan.

looter. When I heard that John had got Judge Narragansett, too, I invited the Judge to come here. Then we asked Richard Halley to join us. The others remained outside at first."

"We had no rules of any kind," said Galt, "except one. When a

man took our oath, it meant a single commitment not to work in his own profession, not to give to the world the benefit of his mind. Each of us carried it out in any manner he chose. Those who had money, retired to live on their savings. Those who had to work, took the lowest jobs they could find. Some of us had been famous, others—like that young brakeman of yours, whom Halley discovered—were stopped by us before they had set out to get tortured. But we did not give up our minds or the work we loved. Each of us continued in his real profession, in whatever manner and spare time he could manage—but he did it secretly, for his own sole benefit, giving nothing to men, sharing nothing. We were scattered all over the country, as the outcasts we had always been, only now we accepted our parts with conscious intention. Our sole relief were the rare occasions when we could see one another. We found that we liked to meet—in order to be reminded that human beings still existed. So we came to set aside one month a year to spend in this valley—to rest, to live in a rational world, to bring our real work out of hiding to men.

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"You see, Miss Taggart," said Hugh Akston, "man is a social being, but not in the way the looters preach."

"It's the destruction of Colorado that started the growth of this valley," said Midas Mulligan. "Ellis Wyatt and the others came to live here permanently, because they had to hide. Whatever part of their wealth they could salvage, they converted into gold or machines, as I had, and they brought it here. There were enough of us to develop the place and to create jobs for those who had had to earn their living outside. We have now reached the stage where most of us can live here full time. The valley is almost self-supporting—and as to the goods that we can't yet produce, I purchase them from the outside through a pipe line of my own. It's a special permit, a man who does not let my money reach the looters. We are not a state here, not a society of any kind—we're just a voluntary association of men held together by nothing but every man's self-interest. I own the valley and I sell the land to the others, when they want it. Judge Narragansett is to act as our arbiter, in case of disagreements. He hasn't had to be called upon, as yet. They say it's hard for men to agree. You'd be surprised how easy it is—when both parties hold as their moral absolute that neither exists for the sake of the other."

Men are stopping and giving up. Your frozen trains, the legions of raiders, the deserters, they're men who've never and they're not part of our strike, they are acting on their the natural response of whatever rationality is still left in the same kind of protest as ours."

"We started with no time limit in view," said Galt. "We did not know whether we'd live to see the liberation of the world or whether we'd have to leave our battle and our secret to the next generation. We knew only that this was the only way we cared to live. But now we think that we will see, and soon, the day of our victory and of our return."

"When?" she whispered.

"When the code of the looters has collapsed."

He saw her looking at him, her glance half-question, half hope, and he added, "When the creed of self-immolation has run its course, its undisguised course—when men find no victims ready to obstruct the path of justice and to deflect the fall of retribution upon themselves—when the preachers of self-sacrifice discover that those who are willing to practice it, have nothing to sacrifice, and those who have are not willing any longer—when men see that neither their hearts nor their muscles can save them but the mind that

... the Taggart Terminal, she thought, she heard the words beating through the air—

... straight lines of rail met and vanished, drawing her forward—they had drawn Nathaniel Taggart—this was the goal Nathaniel Taggart.

the straight

men in

had dedicated herself to the rail of Taggart Transcontinental, as the body of a spirit yet to be found. She had found it, everything she had ever wanted, it was here in the room reached and hers—but the price was that the bridges

go out.

And thought—looking at

hair and implacable eyes.

"You don't have to answer us now."

She raised her head, he was watching her as if he had followed the steps in her mind.

"We never demand agreement," he said. "We never tell anyone more than he is ready to hear. You are the first person who has learned our secret ahead of time. But you're here and you had to know. Now you know the exact nature of the choice you'll have to make. If it seems hard, it's because you still think that it does not have to be one or the other. You will learn that it does not."

"Will you give me time?"

"Your time is not ours to give. Take your time. You alone can decide what you'll choose to do, and when. We know the

of that decision. We've paid it. That you've come here might now make it easier for you—or harder."

"Harder," she whispered.

"I know."

He said it, his voice as low as hers, with the same sound of being forced past one's breath, and she missed an instant of time, as in the past.

A full moon stood in the sky above the valley, when they drove back to his house, and

distance, its shapes did not

the road was lit

lighted windows were

walls were dissolved

a torpid, unhurried way. It looked like a city sinking under

water. "What do they call this place?" she asked.

"I call it Mulhgan's Valley," he said. "The others call it Galt's

Valley."

"I'd call it—" but she did not finish.

He glanced at her. She knew what he saw in her face. He turned

away. She saw a flash of the release of a breath

in his glance, her arm

and were suddenly

elbow

and pine branches

over their heads. Above a slant of rock moving to meet them

he saw the moonlight on the windows of his house. Her head fell

back against the seat and she lay still, losing awareness of the car,

feeling only the motion that carried her forward, watching the

falling drops of water in the pine branches, which were the stars.

When the car stopped, she did not permit herself to know why

she did not look at him as she stepped out. She did not know that

she stood still for an instant, looking up at the dark windows. She

did not hear him approach, but she felt the impact of his hands

with shocking intensity, as if it were the only awareness she could

experience. He lifted her in his arms and started slowly up

the path to the house.

He walked, not looking at her, holding her tight, as if trying

to hold a progression of time, as if his arms were still locked

over the moment when he had lifted her against his chest. She

was steps as if they were a single span of motion to a goal and

each step were a separate moment in which she dared not

of the next. Her head was close to his, his hair brushing her cheek and she knew that neither of them would move his face that one breath closer . . .  
complete in its . . .  
in space that I . . .  
with his eyes :

He entered the house and as he moved across the living room he did not look to his left and neither did she, but she knew that both of them were seeing the door on his left that led to his bedroom. He walked the length of the darkness to the wedge of moonlight that fell across the guest room bed, he placed her down upon it she felt an instant's pause of his hands still holding her shoulder and waistline, and when his hands left her body, she knew that the moment was over.

He stepped back and pressed a switch, surrendering the room to the harshly public glare of light. He stood still, as if demanding that she look at him, his face expectant and stern.

"Have you forgotten that you wanted to shoot me on sight?" he asked.

It was the unprotected stillness of his figure that made it real. The shudder that threw her upright was like a cry of terror and denial, but she held his glance and answered evenly, "That's true I did."

"Then stand by it."

Her voice was low its intensity was both a surrender and a scornful reproach. "You know better than that, don't you?"

He shook his head. "No I want you to remember that that has been your wish. You were right, in the past. So long as you were part of the outer world you had to seek to destroy me. And of the two courses now open to you one will lead you to the day when you will find yourself forced to do it." She did not answer, she was looking down he saw the strands of her hair swing jerkily as she shook her head in desperate protest. "You are my only danger. You are the only person who could deliver me to my enemies. If you remain with them you will choose that, if you wish to choose it with full knowledge. Don't answer me now. But until you do"—the stress of severity in his voice was the sound of effort directed against himself—remember that I know the meaning of either answer."

"As fully as I do?" she whispered.

"As fully."

He turned to go when her eyes fell suddenly upon the inscriptions she had noticed and forgotten, on the walls of the room.

They were cut into the polish of the wood, still showing the force of the pencil's pressure in the hands that had made them, each in his own violent writing. "You'll get over it—Ellis Wyatt." "It will be all right by morning—Ken Danagger." "It's worth it—Roger Marsh." There were others.

"What is that?" she asked.

He smiled. "This is the room where they spent their first night in the valley. The first night is the hardest. It's the last pull of the

speak with one's memories, and the worst I let them stay here, so they can call for me, if they want me I speak to them, if they can't sleep. Most of them can't. But they're free of it by morning . . . They've all gone through this room. Now they call it the torture chamber or the anteroom—because everyone has to enter the valley through my house."

"H. . . ."

threshold and added

" . . . ."

you to occupy. Good night,

## Chapter II THE UTOPIA OF GREED

"Good morning."

She looked at him across the living room from the threshold of her door. In the windows behind him, the mountains had that tinge of silver pink which seems brighter than daylight, with the promise of a light to come. The sun had risen somewhere over the earth but it had not reached the top of the barrier, and the sky was dawning in its stead, announcing its motion. She had heard the joyous greeting to the sunrise, which was not the song of birds, but the ringing of the telephone a moment ago. She saw the start of day, not in the shining green of the branches outside but in the glitter of chromium on the stove, the sparkle of a glass ashtray on a table, and the crisp whiteness of his shirt sleeves. Irresistibly he heard the sound of a smile in her own voice matching his, as he answered.

"Good morning."

He was gathering notes of penciled calculations from his desk and tucking them into his pocket. "I have to go down to the powerhouse," he said. "They've just phoned me that they're having trouble with the ray screen. Your plane seems to have knocked it off key. I'll be back in half an hour and then I'll cook our breakfast."

It was the casual simplicity of his voice, the manner of taking her presence and their domestic routine for granted as if it were of no significance to them, that gave her the sense of an under-scored significance and the feeling that he knew it.

She answered as casually, "If you'll bring me the cane I left in the car I'll have breakfast ready for you by the time you come back."

He glanced at her with a slight astonishment. His eyes moved from her bandaged ankle to the short sleeves of the blouse that left her arms bare to display the heavy bandage on her elbow. But the transparent blouse, the open collar, the hair falling down on the shoulders that seemed innocently naked under a thin film of cloth, made her look like a schoolgirl, not an invalid, and her posture made the bandages look irrelevant.

"H. . . ."

her hesitantly conscious of her hands, as if to touch any object around her would be too great an intimacy. The other part was a reckless sense of ease, a sense of being at home in this place as if she owned its owner.

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ing a  
tions  
performed for their own sake, for the sort of pleasure one expects, but seldom finds, in the motions of dancing. It startled her to realize that she had not experienced this kind of pleasure in her work since her days at the operator's desk in Rockdale Station.

She was setting the table, when she saw the figure of a man  
that leaped  
the door  
her He  
nd a face  
ll, staring

at him, not in admiration, at first, but in simple disbelief. He looked at her as if he had not expected to find a woman in this house. Then she saw a look of recognition melting into a different kind of surprise.

words  
you  
know that it's not possible," he said. "Not here."

"I crashed the gate. Literally."

He looked at her bandages, weighing the question, his glance almost insolent in its open curiosity. "When?"

"Yesterday."

"How?"

"In a plane."

"What were you doing in a plane in this part of the country?"

He had the direct, imperious manner of an aristocrat or a rough neck, he looked like one and was dressed like the other. She considered him for a moment, deliberately letting him wait. "I was trying to land on a prehistorical mirage," she answered. "And I have."

"You are enough," he said, looking at the simple

at  
movements with an open grin, as if the sight of her laying out cutlery on a kitchen table were the spectacle of some special paradox.

"What did Francisco say when he saw you here?" he asked. She turned to him with a slight jolt, but answered evenly. "He is not here yet."

"Not yet?" He seemed startled. "Are you  
"So I was told."

He lighted a cigarette. She wondered, watching him, what profession he had chosen, loved and abandoned in order to join this valley she had seen in the papers. She caught no proof of his indignity, but she did not see—and

it seemed to be a stressed indignity of the outer world that a perfection such as his should be subjected to the shocks, the strains, the scars reserved for any man who loved his work. But the feeling seemed the more preposterous, because the lines of his face had the sort of hardness for which no danger on earth was a match.

"No Miss Taggart," he said suddenly, catching her glance, "you've never seen me before."

She was shocked to realize that she had been studying him openly. "How do you happen to know who I am?" she asked.

"First, I've seen your pictures in the papers many times. Second, you're the only woman left in the outer world to the best of our knowledge, who'd be allowed to enter Galt's Gulch. Third, you're the only woman who'd have the courage—and prodigality—still to remain a scab."

"What made you certain that I was a scab?"

"If you weren't, you'd know that it's not this valley but the view of life held by men in the outer world that is a prehistorical mirage."

They heard the sound of the motor and saw the car stopping below in front of the house. She noticed the swiftness with which he rose to his feet at the sight of Galt in the car, if it were not for the obvious personal eagerness, it would have looked like an instructive gesture of military respect.

She noticed the way Galt stopped when he entered and saw his visitor. She noticed that Galt smiled but that his voice was oddly low, almost solemn, as if weighted with unconfessed relief, when he said very quietly, "Hello."

"Hi, John," said the visitor gaily.

She noticed that their handshake came an instant too late and lasted an instant too long, like the handshake of men who had not been certain that their previous meeting would not be their last.

Galt turned to her. "Have you met?" he asked, addressing them both.

"Not exactly," said the visitor.

"Miss Taggart, may I present Ragnar Danneberg?"

She knew what her face had looked like when she heard Danneberg's voice as from a great distance. "You don't have to be frightened, Miss Taggart. I'm not dangerous to anyone in Galt's Gulch."

She could only shake her head before she recaptured her voice to say "It's not what you're doing to anyone. It's what they're doing to you."

His laughter swept her out of her moment's stupor. "Be Miss Taggart. If that's how you're beginning to feel you



remain a scab for long" He added, "But you ought to start by adopting the right things from the people in Galt's Gulch, not their mistakes they've spent twelve years worrying about me—needlessly" He glanced at Galt

"When did you get in?" asked Galt.

"Late last night"

"Sit down You're going to have breakfast with us"

"But where's Francisco? Why isn't he here yet?"

"I don't know," said Galt, frowning slightly "I asked at the airport, just now Nobody's heard from him"

As she turned to the kitchen, Galt moved to follow "No," she said, "it's my job today"

"Let me help you"

"This is the place where one doesn't ask for help, isn't it?"

He smiled "That's right"

She had never experienced the pleasure of motion, of walking as if her feet had no weight to carry, as if the support of the cane in her hand were merely a superfluous touch of elegance, the pleasure of feeling her steps trace swift, straight lines, of sensing the faultless, spontaneous precision of her gestures—as she experienced it while placing their food on the table in front of the two men Her bearing told them that she knew they were watching her—she held her head like an actress on a stage like a woman in ballroom like the winner of a silent contest

"Francisco will be glad to know that it's you who were in the stand in today," said Danneberg, when she joined them at the table

"His what?"

"You see, today is June first, and the three of us—John Francisco and I—have had breakfast together on every June first for twelve years"

"Here?"

"Not when we started But here, ever since this house was built eight years ago" He shrugged, smiling "For a man who has more centuries of tradition behind him than I have, it's odd that Francisco should be the first to break our own tradition"

"And Mr Galt?" she asked "How many centuries does he have behind him?"

"John? None at all. None behind him—but all of those ahead."

"Never mind the centuries," said Galt "Tell me what sort of year you've had behind you Lost any men?"

"No"

"Lost any of your time?"

"You mean, was I wounded? No I haven't had a scratch since that one time, ten years ago, when I was still an amateur, which you ought to forget by now I wasn't in any danger whatever, this year—in fact I was much more safe than if I were running a small town drugstore under Directive 10-289"

"Lost any battles?"

"No The losses were all on the other side, this year The looters took most of their ships to me—and most of their men to

You've had a good year, too, haven't you? I know, I've kept track of it. . . .

soon, because he's hanging by a thin thread and is just about ready to fall in your feet. He's a man who saved my life—so you can see how far he's gone."

Galt leaned back, his eyes narrowing. "So you weren't in any danger whatever, were you?"

Danneskjold laughed. "Oh, I took a slight risk. It was worth it. It was the most enjoyable encounter I've ever had. I've been waiting to tell you about it in person. It's a story you'll want to hear. Do you know who the man was? Hank Rearden. I—"

"No!" It was Galt's voice, it was a command, the brief snap of sound had a tinge of violence neither of them had ever heard from him before.

"What?" asked Danneskjold softly, incredulously.

"Don't tell me about it now."

"But you've always said that Hank Rearden was the one man you wanted to see here most."

"I still do. But you'll tell me later."

She studied Galt's face intently, but she could find no clue, only a closed, impersonal look, either of determination or of control, that tightened the skin of his cheekbones and the line of his mouth. No matter what he knew about her, she thought, the only knowledge that could explain this, was a knowledge he had had no way of acquiring.

"You've met Hank Rearden?" she asked, turning to Danneskjold. "And he saved your life?"

"Yes."

"I want to hear about it."

"I don't," said Galt.

"Why not?"

"You're not one of us, Miss Taggart."

"I see." She smiled, with a faint touch of defiance. "Were you thinking that I might prevent you from getting Hank Rearden?"

"No, that was not what I was thinking."

She noticed that Danneskjold was studying Galt's face as if he, too, found the incident inexplicable. Galt held his glance, deliberately and openly, as if challenging him to find the explanation and promising that he would fail. She knew that Danneskjold had failed, when she saw a faint crease of humor softening Galt's eyelids.

"What else," asked Galt, "have you accomplished this year?"

"I've defied the law of gravitation."

"You've always done that. In what particular form now?"

"In the form of a flight from mid Atlantic to Colorado in a loaded with gold beyond the safety point of its capacity. Midas sees the amount I have to deposit. My customers,

will become richer by—Say, have you told Miss Taggart that she's one of my customers?"

"No, not yet. You may tell her, if you wish."

"I'm—What did you say I am?" she asked.

"Don't be shocked, Miss Taggart," said Danneskjöld. "And don't object. I'm used to objections. I'm a sort of freak here, anyway. None of them approve of my particular method of fighting on battle. John doesn't, Dr. Akston doesn't. They think that my life is too valuable for it. But, you see, my father was a bishop—and of all his teachings there was only one sentence that I accepted: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.'"

"What do you mean?"

"That violence is not practical. If my fellow men believe in the force of the combined tonnage of their muscles is a practical means to rule me—let them learn the outcome of a contest in which there's nothing but brute force on one side, and force rules by a landslide. . . . I have the  
the  
who  
spirit.

He is depriving them of reason, I'm depriving them of wealth. He is draining the soul of the world, I'm draining its body. His is the lesson they have to learn, only I'm impatient and I'm hastening their scholastic progress. But, like John, I'm simply complying with their moral code and refusing to grant them a double standard at my expense. Or at Rearden's expense. Or at yours."

"What are you talking about?"

"About a method of taxing the income taxers. All methods of taxation are complex, but this one is very simple, because it's the naked essence of all the others. Tax me as you wish."

pages of a ledger—a ledger where every entry was made by means of offering his own life, and the illustration in the drained:

beautiful to risk. . . . Then it struck her that his physical perfection was only a simple illustration, a childish lesson given to her in crudely obvious terms on the nature of the outer world and on the fate of any human value in a subhuman age. Whatever the justice or the evil of his course, she thought, how could they . . . not she thought, his course was just, and this was the horror of it: that there was no other course for justice to . . . not condemn him, that she could neither  
of reproach

" . . . and the names of my customers, . . ."

en slowly, one by one I had to be certain of the nature of character and career. On my list of restitution, your name was of the first."

■ forced herself to keep her face expressionlessly tight, and answered only, "I see."

Your account is one of the last left unpaid. It is here, at the Ligan Bank, to be claimed by you on the day when you join

I see."

Your account, however, ■ not as large as some of the others, though huge sums were extorted from you by force in the twelve years. You will find—as it is marked on the copies of income-tax returns which Mulligan will hand over to you—that

■ have refunded every penny of your profit—but under your Ther's management, Taggart Transcontinental has taken its re of the looting. It has made profits by force by means of government favors, subsidies, moratoriums, directives. You were not possible for it, you were, in fact, the greatest victim of that way—but I refunded only the money which was made by pure deductive ability, not the money any part of which was loot taken force."

I see."

They had finished their breakfast. Danneskjold lighted a cigarette. I watched her for an instant through the first jet of smoke as if I knew the violence of the conflict in her mind—then he grinned. Galt and rose to his feet.

"I'll run along," he said. "My wife is waiting for me."

"What?" she gasped.

"My wife," he repeated gaily, as if he had not understood the son of her shock.

"Who is your wife?"

"Kay Ludlow."

The implications that struck her were more than she could bear. Consider "When . . . when were you married?"

"Four years ago."

"How could you show yourself anywhere long enough to go through a wedding ceremony?"

"We were married here, by Judge Narragansett."

"How can"—she tried to stop, but the words burst involuntarily, helpless indignant protest, whether against him fate or the outer world, she could not tell—"how can she live through eleven months thinking that you, ■ any moment, might be . . . ?" She did not

He was smiling but she saw the enormous solemnity of such he and his wife had needed to earn their right to this smile. "She can live through it, Miss Taggart because we hold the belief that this earth is a realm of misery where

doomed to destruction. We do not think that tragedy is our natural fate and we do not live in chronic dread of disaster. We do not expect disaster until we have specific reason to expect it—and when we encounter it we are free to fight it. It is not happiness, but suffering that we consider unnatural. It is not success but calamity that we regard as the abnormal exception in human life."

Galt accompanied him to the door, then came back sat down at the table and in a leisurely manner reached for another cup of coffee.

She shot to her feet as if flung by a jet of pressure breaking a safety valve. "Do you think that I'll ever accept his money?"

He waited until the curving streak of coffee had filled his cup.

"Yes I think so."  
"sk his life for it!"

"it!"

"Yes you have."

"Then it will lie in that bank till doomsday!"

"No it won't. If you don't claim it some part of it—a very small part—will be turned over to me in your name."

"In my name? Why?"

"To pay for your room and board."

She stared at him, her look of anger switching to bewilderment, then dropped slowly back on her chair.

He smiled. "How long did you think you were going to stay here, Miss Taggart? He saw her startled look of helplessness."

"You haven't thought of it? I have. You're going to stay here for a month. For the one month of our vacation like the rest of us. I am not asking for your consent—you did not ask for ours when you came here. You broke our rules so you'll have to take the consequences. Nobody leaves the valley during this month. I could let you go, of course, but I won't. There's no rule demanding that I hold you, but by forcing your way here you've given me the right to any choice I make—and I'm going to hold you simply because I want you here. If at the end of a month you decide that you wish to go back, you will be free to do so. Not until then."

She sat straight, the planes of her face relaxed, the shape of her

"I shall charge you for your room and board—it is against our rules to provide the unearned sustenance of another human being. Some of us have wives and children, but there is a mutual trade involved in that, and a mutual payment"—he glanced at her—"of a kind I am not entitled to collect. So I shall charge you fifty cents a day and you will pay me when you accept the account that be in your name at the Mulligan Bank. If you don't accept the account, Mulligan will charge your debt against it and he will give me the money when I ask for it."

"I shall comply with your terms," she answered, her voice had the shrewd, confident, deliberating slowness of a trader. "But I shall not permit the use of that money for my debts."

"How else do you propose to comply?"

"I propose to earn my room and board"

"By what means?"

"By working"

"In what capacity?"

"In the capacity of your cook and housemaid"

For the first time, she saw him take the shock of the unexpected, in a manner and with a violence she had not foreseen. It was only an explosion of laughter on his part—but he laughed as if he were but beyond his defenses, much beyond the immediate meaning of her words, she felt that she had struck his past, tearing loose some memory and meaning of his own which she could not know. He laughed as if he were seeing some distant image, as if he were laughing in its face, as if this were his victory—and then.

"If you will hire me," she said, her face severely polite, her tone curiously clear, impersonal and businesslike. "I shall cook your meals, clean your house, do your laundry and perform such other duties as are required of a servant—in exchange for my room, board and such money as I will need for some items of clothing. I may be slightly handicapped by my injuries for the next few days, but that will not last and I will be able to do the job fully"

"Is that what you want to do?" he asked

"That is what I want to do—" she answered, and stopped before she uttered the rest of the answer in her mind more than anything in the world

He was still smiling, it was a smile of amusement, but it was as if amusement could be transmuted into some shining glory. "All right, Miss Taggart," he said, "I'll hire you"

She inclined her head in a dryly formal acknowledgment. "Thank you"

"I will pay you ten dollars a month, in addition to your room and board"

"Very well"

"I shall be the first man in this valley to hire a servant" He got reached into his pocket and threw a five-dollar gold piece down on the table. "As advance on your wages," he said

She was startled to discover, as her hand reached for the gold piece, that she felt the eager, desperate, tremulous hope of a young woman on her first job—the hope that she would be able to deserve it. "Yes, sir," she said, her eyes lowered.

When Kellogg arrived on the afternoon of her third day in the valley

he did not know which shocked him most—the sight of her standing on the edge of the airfield as he descended from the plane, the sight of her clothes—her delicate transparent blouse and the most expensive shop in New York, and the wide,

print skirt she had bought in the valley for sixty cents—her can  
her bandages or the basket of groceries on her arm

He descended among a group of men, he saw her, he stopped  
then ran to her as if flung forward by some emotion so strong that  
whatever its nature it looked like terror

"Miss Taggart," he whispered—and said nothing else, and  
she laughed trying to explain how she had come to beat him to the  
destination

He listened as if it were irrelevant, and then he uttered the  
thing from which he had to recover, "But we thought you were  
dead."

"Who thought it?"

"All of us," I mean everybody in the outside world."

Then she suddenly stopped smiling, while his voice began to re-  
capture his story and his first sound of joy

"Miss Taggart, don't you remember? You told me to phone  
Winston, Colorado and to tell them that you'd be there by noon  
of the next day. That was to be the day before yesterday. May  
thirty-first. But you did not reach Winston—and by late afternoon  
the news was on all the radios that you were lost in a plane crash  
somewhere in the Rocky Mountains."

She nodded slowly, grasping the events she had not thought of  
considering

"I heard it aboard the Comet," he said. "At a small station in  
the middle of New Mexico. The conductor held us there for an  
hour, while I helped him to check the story on long-distance phones.  
He was hit by the news just as I was. They all were—the train crew,  
the station agent, the switchmen. They huddled around me while  
I called the city rooms of newspapers in Denver and New York.  
We didn't learn much. Only that you had left the Afton airfield just  
before dawn on May thirty-first, that you seemed to be following  
some stranger's plane that the attendant had seen you go off south-  
east—and that nobody had seen you since. . . . And that search-  
ing parties were combing the Rockies for the wreckage of your  
plane."

She asked involuntarily, "Did the Comet reach San Francisco?"

"I don't know. She was crawling north through Arizona, when  
I gave up. There were too many delays, too many things going  
wrong, and a total confusion of orders. I got off and spent the  
night hitchhiking my way to Colorado, bumming rides on trucks  
on buggies, on horse carts, to get there on time—to get to our  
meeting place, I mean, where we gather for Midas' ferry plane  
to pick us up and bring us here."

She started walking slowly up the path toward the car she had  
left in front of Hammond's Grocery Market. Kellogg followed,  
and when he spoke again, his voice dropped a little, slowing down  
with their steps, as if there were something they both wished to  
delay

"I got a job for Jeff Allen," he said, his voice had the peculiarly  
solemn tone proper for saying "I have carried out your last will."  
"Your agent at Laurel grabbed him and put him to . . . the

moment we got there The agent needed every able bodied—no, able-minded—man he could find "

They had reached the car, but she did not get in

"Miss Taggart, you weren't hurt badly, were you? Did you say you crashed, but it wasn't serious?"

"No not serious at all I'll be able to get along without Mr Mulligan's car by tomorrow—and in a day or two I won't need this one, either" She swung her cane and tossed it contemptuously into the car They stood in silence, she was waiting

"The last long-distance call I made from that station in New Mexico" he said slowly, "was to Pennsylvania I spoke to Hank Hardin I told him everything I knew He listened, and then there was a pause and then he said, 'Thank you for calling me' Kellogg's eyes were lowered, he added, "I never want to hear that kind of pause again as long as I live"

He raised his eyes to hers, there was no reproach in his glance, only the knowledge of that which he had not suspected when he heard her request, but had guessed since

"Thank you," she said and threw the door of the car open "Can I give you a lift? I have to get back and get dinner ready before my employer comes home"

It was in the first moment of returning to Galt's house, of stand-

and the courage that fed it—as she wanted to fight for the world that crawled by a last effort across a desert on a crumbling track She shuddered, closing her eyes, feeling as if she were guilty of double treason, feeling as if she were suspended in space between this valley and the rest of the earth with no right to either

The feeling vanished when she sat facing Galt across the dinner table He was watching her, openly and with an untroubled look as if her presence were normal—and as if the sight of her were all he wished to allow into his consciousness

She leaned back a little, as if complying with the meaning of his glance, and said dryly, efficiently, in deliberate denial "I have checked your shirts and found one with two buttons missing and another with the left elbow worn through. Do you wish me to mend them?"

"Why yes—if you can do it."

"I can do it"

It did not seem to alter the nature of his glance It merely seemed to stress its satisfaction, as if this were what he had wished her to say—except that she was not certain whether it was the name for the thing she saw in his eyes and fully knew that he had not wished her to say anything

Beyond the window, at the edge of the table, storm



had wiped out the last remnants of light in the eastern sky. She wondered why she felt a sudden reluctance to look out, why she felt as if she wanted to cling to the golden patches of light on the wood of the table, on the buttered crust of the rolls, on the copper coffee pot, on Galt's hair—to cling as to a small island on the edge of a void.

Then she heard her own voice asking suddenly, involuntarily, and she knew that this was the treason she had wanted to escape. "Do you permit any communication with the outside world?"

"No."

"Not any? Not even a note without return address?"

"No."

"Not even a message, if no secret of yours were given away?"

"Not from here. Not during this month. Not to outsiders at any time."

She noticed that she was avoiding his eyes, and she forced herself to lift her head and face him. His glance had changed, it was watchful, unmoving, implacably perceptive. He asked, looking at her as if he knew the reason of her query, "Do you wish to ask for a special exception?"

"No," she answered, holding his glance.

Next morning, after breakfast, when she sat in her room, carefully placing a patch on the sleeve of Galt's shirt, with her door closed, she heard a familiar task,

heard  
anger

She rose to her feet. In a moment she heard his voice, its tone to the shock of some

at sounded steady, but

She sat down on her bed, feeling suddenly drained of strength. The voice was Francisco's.

She heard Galt asking, his tone severe with concern, "What is it?"

"I'll tell you afterwards."

"Why are you so late?"

"I have to leave again in an hour."

"To leave?"

"John, I just came to tell you that I won't be able to stay here this year."

There was a pause, then Galt asked gravely, his voice low, "Is it as bad as that—whatever it is?"

"Yes. . . . I might be back before the month is over. I don't know." He added, with the sound of a desperate effort, "I don't know whether to hope to be done with it quickly or . . . or not."

"Francisco, could you stand a shock right now?"

"If nothing could shock me now."

"There's a person, here, in my guest room,

see. It will be a shock to you, so I think I'd better warn you in advance that this person is still a scab."

"What? A scab? In *your* house?"

"Let me tell you how—"

"That's something I want to see for myself!"

She heard Francisco's contemptuous chuckle and the rush of his steps, she saw her door flung open, and she noticed dimly that it was Galt who closed it, leaving them alone.

She did not know how long Francisco stood looking at her, because the first moment that she grasped fully was when she saw

"When he raised his head, he looked as she had felt when she had opened her eyes in the valley—he looked as if no pain had ever existed in the world. He was laughing

as if a confession were repeating that it had ever been when he made you, darling!

"You, I always will—don't be afraid for me. I don't care if I'll never have you again, what does that matter?—you're alive and you're here and you know everything now. And it's so simple, isn't it? Do you see what it was and why I had to desert you?" His arm swept out to point at the valley. "There it is—it's *your* earth, *your* kingdom, *your* kind of world—Dagny, I've always loved you and that I deserted you, *that* was my love."

He took her hands and pressed them to his lips and held them, not moving, not as a kiss, but as a long moment of rest, as if the effort of speech were a distraction from the fact of her presence, and as if he were torn by too many things to say, by the pressure of all the words stored in the silence of years.

"The women I chased—you didn't believe that, did you? I've never touched one of them—but I think you knew it, I think you've known it all along. The playboy—it was a part that I had to play in order not to let the looters suspect me while I was destroying El Anconia Copper in plain sight of the whole world. That's the policy in their system, they're out to fight any man of honor and ambition, but let them see a worthless rotter and they think he's a friend, they think he's safe—*safe!*—that's their view of life, but are they learning?—are they learning whether evil is safe and competence practical! . . . Dagny, it was the night when I, for the first time, that I loved you—it was then that I knew I to go. It was when you entered my hotel room, that night

I saw what you looked like what you were what you meant to me  
—and what awaited you in the future Had you been less you might  
have stopped me for a while I  
argument that made me leave

—against John Galt But I  
against me though neither you nor he could know it  
everything that he was seeking everything he told us to live for or  
die if necessary I was ready for him when he called me sud-  
denly to come to New York that spring I had not heard from him  
for some time He was fighting the same problem I was He solved  
it Do you remember? It was the time when you did not hear  
from me for three years Dagny when I took over my father's

trial system of the evil  
w the tax  
pioneer  
d Anconia Copper draining us by no right that anyone could name—  
I saw the government regulations passed to cripple me, because  
was successful and to help my competitors because they were  
loading failures—I saw the labor unions who won every claim  
against me by reason of my ability to make their livelihood pos-  
sible—I saw that any man's desire for money he could not earn was  
regarded as a righteous wish but if he earned it it was damnable  
greed—I saw the politicians who winked at me telling me to  
to worry because I could just work a little harder and outsmart  
them all I looked past the profits of the moment and I saw that  
the harder I worked the more I tightened the noose around my  
throat I saw that my energy was being poured down a sewer  
that the parasites who fed on me were being fed upon in their  
turn that they were caught in their own trap—and that there  
was no reason for it no answer known to anyone that the sewer  
pipes of the world draining its productive blood led into a  
dark fog nobody had dared to pierce while people merely shrug-  
ged and said that life on earth could be nothing but evil And then  
I saw that the whole industrial establishment of the world, all  
all of its magnificent machinery its thousand-ton furnaces its  
transatlantic cables its mahogany offices its stock exchanges,  
blazing electric signs its power its wealth—all of it was run, not  
by bankers and boards of directors but by any unshaven human  
tarian in any basement beer joint by any face pudgy with malice  
who preached that virtue must be penalized for being virtuous  
the purpose of ability is to serve incompetence that man has  
right to exist except for the sake of others I knew it. I saw  
no way to fight it John found the way There were just the two  
of us with him the night when we came to New York in answer  
to his call Ragnar and I He told us what we had to do and what  
sort of men we had to reach He had quit the Twentieth Century  
He was living in a garret in a slum neighborhood He stepped  
the window and pointed at the skyscrapers of the city He said  
that we had to extinguish the lights of the world and when we  
would see the lights of New York go out, we

our job was done. He did not ask us to join him at once. He told us to think it over and to weigh everything it would do to our lives. I gave him my answer on the morning of the second day, and Ragnar a few hours later, in the afternoon. Dagny, that was the morning after our last night together. I had seen, in a manner of vision that I couldn't escape, what it was that I had to fight for. It was for the way you

when we  
rock over  
on, to let  
you and your city—not to let you stumble the years of your life away, struggling on through a poisoned fog, with your eyes still held straight ahead, still looking as they had looked in the sunlight struggling on to find, at the end of your road, not the towers of a city, but a fat, soggy, mindless cripple performing his enjoyment of life by means of swallowing the gun. Your life had gone to pay for it. You—to know no joy in order that he may know it? You—to serve as fodder for the pleasure of others? You—as the means for the subhuman as the end? Dagny, that was what I saw and that was what I couldn't let them do to you! Not to you, not to any child who  
y man  
being  
love,  
and I  
ld be

living with every year of the battle. But you see it now, don't you? You've seen this valley. It's the place we set out to reach when we were children, you and I. We've reached it. What else can I ask for now? Just to see you here—did John say you're still a scab?—oh well, it's only a matter of time, but you'll be one of us, because you've always been, if you don't see it fully we'll wait, I don't care—so long as you're alive, so long as I don't have to go on flying over the Rockies, looking for the wreckage of your plane!"

She gasped a little, realizing why he had not come to the valley on time.

He laughed. "Don't look like that. Don't look at me as if I were a wound that you're afraid to touch."

"Francisco, I've hurt you in so many different ways—"

"Not No, you haven't hurt me—and he hasn't either, don't say anything about it, it's he who's hurt, but we'll save him and he'll come here."

She closed her eyes, pressing her lips together but to no use.

"Darling, don't! Don't you see that I've accepted it?"

But it isn't—she thought—it isn't he, and I can't tell you the truth, because it's a man who might never hear it from me whom I might never have

"Francisco, I did love you—" she said, and caught her

shocked realizing that she had not intended to say it and, simultaneously that this was not the tense she had wanted in use.

But you do he said calmly smiling You still love me—even if there's one expression of it that you'll always feel and want, but will not give me any longer I'm still what I was, and you'll always see it and you'll always grant me the same response even if there's a greater one that you grant to another man No matter what you feel for him it will not change what you feel for me and it won't be treason to either because it comes from the same root it's the same payment in answer to the same values No matter what happens in the future we'll always be what we were in each other you and I because you'll always love me

Francisco she whispered do you know that?

Of course Don't you understand it now? Dagny every form of happiness is one every desire is driven by the same motor—by our love for a single value for the highest potentiality of our own existence—and every achievement is an expression of it. Look around you Do you see how much is open to us here on an unobstructed earth? Do you see how much I am free to do to experience to achieve? Do you see that all of it is part of what you are to me—as I am part of it for you? And if I'll see you smile with admiration at a new copper smelter that I built, it will be another form of what I felt when I lay in bed beside you Will I want to sleep with you? Desperately Will I envy the man who does? Sure But what does that matter? It's so much—just to have you here to love you and to be alive”

Her eyes lowered her face stern, holding her head bowed as in an act of reverence she said slowly, as if fulfilling a solemn promise “Will you forgive me?”

He looked astonished then chuckled gaily remembering and answered “Not yet There's nothing to forgive but I'll forgive when you join us

He rose he drew her to her feet—and when his arms closed about her their kiss was the summation of their past, its end and their seal of acceptance

Galt turned to them from across the living room when the door came out He had been standing at a window looking at the valley—and she felt certain that he had stood there all that time She saw his eyes studying their faces his glance moving slowly from one to the other His face relaxed a little in the light of the chamber in Francisco's

Francisco smiled asking him “Why do you stare at me?”

“Do you know what you looked like when you came in?”

“Oh did I? That's because I hadn't slept for three nights John will you invite me to dinner? I want to know how this scab of yours got here but I think that I might collapse sound asleep in the middle of a sentence—even though right now I feel as if I'll never need any sleep at all—so I think I'd better go home and stay there till evening”

Galt was watching him with a faint smile “But aren't you going to leave the valley in an hour?”

"What? No" he said mildly in momentary astonishment. "No" he laughed exultantly "I don't have to! That's right I haven't told you what it was have I? I was searching for Dagny For for the wreck of her plane. She'd been reported lost in a crash in the Rockies"

"I see" "I see"

all Alton, Utah and Winston, Colorado over every peak and crevice of it, over every remnant of a car in any gully below and whenever I saw one I— He stopped it looked like a shudder "Then at night, we went out on foot—the searching parties of rail road men from Winston—we went climbing at random with no clues, no plan, on and on, until it was daylight again and— He shrugged, trying to dismiss it and to smile I wouldn't wish it on my worst—"

He stopped short his smile vanished and a dim reflection of the look he had worn for three days came back to his face as if at the sudden presence of an image he had forgotten

After a long moment, he turned to Galt "John" his voice sounded peculiarly solemn "could we notify those outside that Dagny is alive in case there's somebody who whod feel as I did?"

Galt was looking straight at him Do you wish to give any outsider any relief from the consequences of remaining outside? Francisco dropped his eyes but answered firmly "No"

"Pity Francisco?"

"Yes Forget it. You're right."

Galt turned away with a movement that seemed oddly out of character it had the unrhythmical abruptness of the involuntary

He did not turn back Francisco watched him in astonishment, then asked not "What?"

Galt's face could be seen as if something greater that seemed to make these concepts superfluous

"Whatever any of us has paid for this battle" said Galt, "you're the one who's taken the hardest beating aren't you?"

"Who? I?" Francisco grinned with shocked, incredulous amusement. "Certainly not! What's the matter with you?" He chuckled and added, "Pity John?"

"No" said Galt firmly

She saw Francisco watching him with a faint puzzled frown— because Galt had said it, looking not at him but at her

The emotional sum that struck her as an immediate of Francisco's house when she entered it for the first time the sum she had once drawn from the sight of its

exterior. She felt, not a sense of tragic loneliness, but of invigorating brightness. The rooms were bare and crudely simple, the house seemed built with the skill, the decisiveness and the impatience typical of Francisco, it looked like a frontiersman's shanty thrown together to serve as a mere springboard for a long flight into the future—a future where so great a field of activity lay waiting that no time could be wasted on the comfort of its start. The place had the brightness, not of a home, but of a fresh wooden scaffolding erected to shelter the birth of a skyscraper.

Francisco in shirt sleeves, stood in the middle of his twelve-foot square living room, with the look of a host in a palace. Of all the places where she had ever seen him, this was the background that seemed most properly his. Just as the simplicity of his clothes, added to his bearing, gave him the air of a superlative aristocrat, so the crudeness of the room gave it the appearance of the most patrician retreat: a single royal touch was added to the crudeness: two ancient silver goblets stood in a small niche cut in a wall of bare logs: their ornate design had required the luxury of some craftsman's long and costly labor, more labor than had gone to build the shanty, a design dimmed by the polish of more centuries than had gone to grow the log wall's pines. In the midst of that

a touch of quiet pride,  
This is what I am and

she looked up at the silver goblets.

"Yes," he said, in answer to her silent guess, "they belonged to Sebastián d'Anconia and his wife. That's the only thing I brought here from my palace in Buenos Aires. That, and the crest over the door. It's all I wanted to save. Everything else will go, in a very few months now. He chuckled. "They'll seize it, all of it, the last dregs of d'Anconia Copper, but they'll be surprised. They won't find much for their trouble. And as in that palace, they won't be able to afford even its heating bill."

"And then?" she asked. "Where will you go from there?"

"I? I will go to work for d'Anconia Copper."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you remember that old slogan: 'The king is dead, long live the king'? When the carcass of my ancestors' property is out of the way, then my mine will become the young new body of d'Anconia Copper, the kind of property my ancestors had wanted, had worked for, had deserved, but had never owned."

"Your mine? What mine? Where?"

"Here," he said, pointing toward the mountain peaks. "Didn't you know it?"

"No."

"I own a copper mine that the looters won't reach. It's here, in these mountains. I did the prospecting, I discovered it, I broke the first excavation. It was over eight years ago. I was the first man to whom Midas sold land in this valley. I bought that mine. I started it with my own hands, as Sebastián d'Anconia had started. I have a superintendent in charge of it now, who used to be my best

copper we require  
That will be all I'll  
all I'll need"

ice sounded on his  
rence between that

with the shameful mawkish tone half-whine half-threat,  
the tone of beggar and thug combined, which the men of their  
century had given to the word "need"

"Dagny" he was saying standing at the window as if looking  
out at the peaks not of mountains but of time the rebirth of  
d'Anconia Copper—and of the world—has to start here in the  
United States This country was the only country in history born,  
not of chance and blind tribal warfare but as a rational product  
of man's mind. This country was built on the supremacy of rea-  
son—and for one magnificent century it redeemed the world It will  
have to do so again The first step of d'Anconia Copper as of any  
other human value has to come from here—because the rest of  
the earth has reached the consummation of the beliefs it has held  
through the ages mystic faith, the supremacy of the irrational  
which has but two monuments at the end of its course the luna-  
tic asylum and the graveyard Sebastián d'Anconia com-

mitted one error he accepted a system which declared that the  
property he had earned by right was to be his not by right, but  
by term

— "I have made  
the day when grow  
the smelters the  
gain through the  
ill be the first to

start my country's rebuilding I may see it but I cannot be certain  
No man can predict the time when others will choose to return  
to reason. It may be that at the end of my life I shall have es-  
tablished nothing but this single mine—d'Anconia Copper No. 1  
Gail's Gulch Colorado U.S.A. But, Dagny do you remember  
that my arm

— "a pound of cop-  
per than all my  
that one pound  
will be mine by right and will be used to maintain a world that  
knows it"

This was the Francisco of their childhood in bearing in man  
— "and she found her  
had questioned  
the shore of the  
future

— "a your ankle  
recovers completely We have to climb a steep trail to get there  
just a mule trail there's no truck road as yet. Let me show you  
the new smelter I'm designing I've been working on it for some  
time it's too complex for our present volume of production  
when the mine's output grows to justify it—just take a look  
the labor and money that it will save"



They were sitting together on the floor bending over the sheets of paper he spread before her, studying the intricate sections of the smelter—with the same joyous earnestness they had once brought to the study of scraps in a junk yard.

She leaned forward just as he moved to reach for another sheet, and she found herself leaning against his shoulder. Involuntarily she held still for one instant, no longer than for a small break in the flow of a single motion while her eyes rose to his. He was looking down at her, neither hiding what he felt nor implying any further demand. She drew back, knowing that she had felt the same desire as his.

Then, still holding the recaptured sensation of what she had felt for him in the past, she grasped a quality that had always been part of it, now suddenly clear to her for the first time. If that desire was a celebration of one's life, then what she had felt for Francisco had always been a celebration of her future, like a moment of splendor gained in part payment of an unknown total, affirming some promise to come. In the instant when she grasped it, she knew also the only desire she had ever experienced not in token of the future but of the full and final present. She knew it by means of an image—the image of a man's figure standing at the door of a small granite structure. The final form of the promise that had kept her moving, she thought, was the man who would perhaps, remain a promise never to be reached.

But this—she thought in consternation—was that view of human destiny which she had most passionately hated and rejected, the view that man was ever to be drawn by some vision of the unattainable shining ahead, doomed ever to aspire but not to achieve. Her life and her values could not bring her to that, she thought, she had never found beauty in longing for the impossible and had never found the possible to be beyond her reach. But she had come to it and she could find no answer.

She could not give him up or give up the world—she thought, looking at Galt that evening. The answer seemed harder to find in his presence. She felt that no problem existed that nothing could stand beside the fact of seeing him and nothing would ever have the power to make her leave—and simultaneously, that she would have no right to look at him if she were to renounce her railroad. She felt that she owned him, that the unnamed had been understood between them from the start—and simultaneously, that

looked as if this were a matter about which he did not choose to feel.

Her faint apprehension grew into a question mark, and the question mark turned into a drill cutting deeper and deeper into her mind through the evenings that followed—when Galt left

house and she remained alone. He went out every other night, and dinner not telling her where he went, returning at midnight later. She tried not to allow herself fully to discover with what passion and restlessness she waited for his return. She did not ask where he spent his evenings. The reluctance that stopped her, her too urgent desire to know, she kept silent in some dimly emotional form of defiance, half in defiance of him, half of her

feared or give them  
by the ugly, nagging  
a savage resentment  
which was her answer

the dread that there might be a woman in his life yet the resentment was softened by some quality of health in the thing she feared, as if the threat could be fought and even, if need be, acted. But there was another, uglier dread—the sordid shape of sacrifice, the suspicion, not to be uttered about him, that he had to remove himself from her path and let its emptiness force back to the man who was his best loved friend.

Days passed before she spoke of it. Then, at dinner, on an evening when he was to leave, she became suddenly aware of the peculiar pleasure she experienced while watching him eat the food she had prepared—and suddenly involuntarily, as if that pleasure gave her a right she dared not identify, as if enjoyment, pain, broke her resistance she heard herself asking him, "What are you doing every other evening?"

He answered simply, as if he had taken for granted that she knew it, "Lecturing."

"What?"  
"Giving a course of lectures on physics, as I do every year during a month. It's my . . . What are you laughing at?" he asked, catching the look of relief, of silent laughter that did not seem to be directed at his words—and then before she answered, he

saw some  
was almost  
impersonal,  
and this in the  
professions

ward Halley is to give concerts, Kay Ludlow is to appear in plays written by authors who do not write for the outside world—and I give lectures, reporting on the work I've done during a year."

"Free lectures?"

"Certainly not. It's ten dollars per person for the course."

"I want to hear you."

He shook his head. "No. You'll be allowed to attend the concerts, the plays or any form of presentation for your own enjoyment but not my lectures or any other sale of ideas which might carry out of this valley. Besides, my customers, or only those who have a practical purpose in taking my

Dwight Sanders, Lawrence Hammond, Dick McNamara, Owen Kellogg a few others I've added one beginner this year Quentin Daniels'

Really? she said almost with a touch of jealousy "How can he afford anything that expensive?"

On credit I've given him a time payment plan He's worth it"

Where do you lecture?"

"In the hangar, on Dwight Sanders' farm"

'And where do you work during the year?"

'In my laboratory"

She asked cautiously, "Where is your laboratory? Here, in the valley?"

He held her eyes for a moment, letting her see that his glance was amused and that he knew her purpose, then answered, "No"

'You've lived in the outside world for all of these twelve years?"

Yes"

"Do you—the thought seemed unbearable—"do you hold some such job as the others?"

Oh yes The amusement in his eyes seemed stressed by some special meaning

Don't tell me that you're a second assistant bookkeeper!"

'No I'm not'

"Then what do you do?"

I hold the kind of job that the world wishes me to hold"

"Where?"

He shook his head 'No, Miss Taggart If you decide to leave the valley, this is one of the things that you are not to know"

He smiled again with that insolently personal quality which now seemed to say that he knew the threat contained in his answer and what it meant to her, then he rose from the table

When he had gone, she felt as if the motion of time were an oppressive weight in the stillness of the house, like a stationary, half-solid mass slithering slowly into some faint elongation by a tempo that left her no measure to know whether minutes had passed or hours She lay half stretched in an armchair of the living room, crumpled by that heavy, indifferent lassitude which is not the will to laziness, but the frustration of the will to a secret violence that no lesser action can satisfy

That special pleasure she had felt in watching him eat the food she had prepared—she thought, lying still, her eyes closed, her mind moving like time, through some realm of veiled slowness—it had been the pleasure of knowing that she had provided him with a sensual enjoyment, that one form of his body's satisfaction had come from her

There is reason, she thought, why a woman would wish to cook for a man , oh, not as a duty, not as a chronic career, only as a rare and special rite in symbol of but what have they made of it, the preachers

The castrated performance of a sickly held to be a woman's proper virtue—while

'duty?'  
'was  
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aning and sanction was held as a shameful sin the work of  
eeking Ethen  
ance with her  
bedroom was  
to an animal

gory meaning or pride of spirit to be claimed  
of the animals involved.

She leaped abruptly to her feet. She did not want to think of the  
ster world or of its moral code. But she knew that that was not  
the subject of her thoughts. And she did not want to think of the  
subject her mind was intent on pursuing the subject to which it  
kept returning against her will by some will of its own.

She paced the room hating the ugly jerky uncontrolled loose  
ness of her movements—torn between the need to let her mot on  
break the stillness and the knowledge that this was not the form  
of break she wanted. She lighted cigarettes for an instant's illusion  
of purposeful action—and discarded them within another instant  
during the weary

om like a  
r a motive  
polish—w  
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its a screen to hide a wish that's worth too much what do you  
want? She snapped a match viciously jerking the flame  
the tip of a cigarette she noticed hanging unlighted in the  
corner of her mouth.

What do you want?—repeated the voice  
at sounded severe as a judge. I want him to come back—she  
answered throwing the words as a soundless cry at some accuser  
than her almost as one would throw a bone to a pursuing beast,  
the hope of distracting it from pouncing upon the rest.

I want him back—she said softly in answer to the accusation  
at there was no reason for so great an impatience. I want

n back—she said pleadingly in answer to the cold reminder that  
r answer did not balance the judge's scale. I want him

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otective word in that sentence.

She felt her head drooping with exhaustion, as after a prolonged  
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wer, because her head had fallen softly against the ch-  
asleep.

When she opened her eyes, she saw him standing there as away looking down at her, as if he had been watching her for some time

She saw his face and, with the clarity of undivided perception, she saw the meaning of the expression on his face. It was the meaning she had fought for hours. She saw it without astonishment because she had not yet regained her awareness of any reason why it should astonish her.

"This is the way you look," he said softly, "when you fall asleep in your office" and she knew that he, too, was not fully aware of letting her hear it the way he said it told her how often he had thought of it and for what reason. "You look as if you would awaken in a world where you had nothing to hide or to fear," and she knew that the first movement of her face had been a smile she knew it in the moment when it vanished when she grasped that they were both awake. He added quietly, with full awareness, "But here it's true."

Her first emotion of the realm of reality was a sense of power. She sat up with a flowing leisurely movement of confidence, feeling the flow of the motion from muscle to muscle through her body. She asked and it was the slowness the sound of casual curiosity, the tone of taking the implications for granted, that gave to her voice the faintest sound of disdain. "How did you know what I look like in my office?"

"I told you that I've watched you for years" — — — where?

then the lower, huskier tone of her voice left a hint of triumph to trail behind her words. "When did you see me for the first time?"

"Ten years ago" he answered, looking straight at her letting her see that he was answering the full, unnamed meaning of her question.

"Where?" The word was almost a command.

He hesitated then she saw a faint smile that touched only his lips not his eyes the kind of smile with which one contemplates with longing bitterness and pride—a possession purchased at an excruciating cost. His eyes seemed directed, not at her, but at the girl of that time. "Underground is the Taggart Terminal" he answered.

She became suddenly conscious of her posture she had let her shoulder blades slide down against the chair, carelessly, half-lying, one leg stretched forward—and with her sternly tailored transparent blouse, her wide peasant skirt hand printed in violent colors, her thin stocking and high heeled pump, she did not look like a railroad

— — — — — in answer to his eyes — — — — — and like that — — — — — when some — — — — — es removed — — — — — y the act of

ing her immediate person. She met his eyes with that insolent  
ice which is a smile without movement of facial muscles.

steps were  
wanted to  
for longer  
watched the  
gun in one  
or certainly

her body had become an instrument for the direct perception  
his, like a screen reflecting both movements and motives—she

or  
on  
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ion  
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er-

ow,  
within her, and she groped, stunned for its cause—

had  
long  
lips,  
was

how

the power  
The seen you many times since," he said quietly, steadily, but  
more slowly than usual, as if he could control everything  
except his need to speak.

"Where have you seen me?"

"Many places."

"But you made certain to remain unseen?" She knew that his  
was a face she could not have failed to notice.

"Yes."

"Why? Were you afraid?"

"Yes."

He said it simply, and it took her a moment to realize that he  
was admitting he knew what the sight of his person would have  
meant to her. "Did you know who I was, when you saw me for  
the first time?"

"Oh yes. My worst enemy but one."

"What?" She had not expected it, she added, more quietly,  
"Is he the worst one?"

"Dr. Robert Stadler."

"Did you have me classified with him?"

"No. He's —"

He's the man who sold his soul  
to you—you were one of us. I knew  
also that you would be the  
defeat."



if we were fellow survivors from some vanishing age or land in  
The mortal sin of Rol

alone to pursue it, he wanted to brush people out of his path  
and he never identified the means to it or the nature of his path  
of his enemies. He took a short cut. Are you smiling, Miss Tagg?  
You hate him, don't you? Yes, you know the kind of short cut  
took. He told you that we were rivals for these three studies.  
That was true—or rather, that was not the way I thought of it. I  
knew that he did. Well, if we were rivals, I had one advantage.  
I knew why they needed both our professions, he never understood

always been a very lonely man. I think that in the whole of his  
Francisco and Ragnar were his only love, and John was his  
passion. It was John whom he regarded as his particular heir, his  
future, as his own immortality. John intended to be an inventor,  
which meant that he was to be a physicist, he was to take his  
graduate course under Robert Stadler. Francisco intended to  
after graduation and go to work, he was to be the perfect blend  
both of us, his two intellectual fathers: an industrialist. And Ra-  
—you didn't know what profession Ragnar had chosen, Miss  
gart? No, it wasn't stunt pilot or jungle explorer, or deep-sea diver.  
It was something much more courageous than these. Ragnar  
tended to be a philosopher. An abstract, theoretical academic, a  
towered ivory tower philosopher. Yes, Robert Stadler loved it.  
And yet—I have said that I would have killed to protect them.

only name of honor  
the looters. He was  
of the looters' guns  
came back for his  
finish it. He left, on the day when Robert Stadler endorsed  
establishment of a State Science Institute. I met Stadler by chance  
in a corridor of the institute. I met Stadler by chance  
last time  
never had  
saw me  
him when

voice reminding her that there would, perhaps, never be any truth of this kind to learn.

Some part of her felt a dim tension as she watched the way Galt looked at Francisco—it was an open simple unreserved glance of surrender to an unreserved feeling. She felt the anxious wonder she

"We don't have many men to spare. We had to build it up for it."

"You're — — — — — of manpower and build a railroad

idden, eager shot in his voice "I

"but it's such a difficult job that the best output won't justify it at present"

"Nonsense! It's much simpler than it looks. There's a pass to the east where there's an easier grade and softer stone. I watched it on the way up, it wouldn't take so many curves three miles of rail or less would do it"

She was pointing east, she did not notice the intensity with which the two men were watching her face

"Just a narrow-gauge track is all you'll need — — — like the first railroads . . . that's where the first railroads started—at mines only they were coal mines

Look, do you see that ridge? There's — — — — — wouldn't need to do — — — — — rise for a — — — — — than a four

glance that the costliest part of the job will be a couple of steel trestles—and there's one spot where I might have to blast a tunnel but it's only for a hundred feet or less. I'll need a steel trestle to throw the track across that gorge and bring it here, but it's not as

expected them to be there as if she were giving orders on a construction site where details of this kind were not to delay her.

"Let me give you a rough idea of what I mean. If we drive diagonal piles into the rock—she was sketching rapidly—the actual steel span would be only six hundred feet long—it would cut off this last half mile of your corkscrew turns—I could have the rail laid in three months and—"

She stopped. When she looked up at their faces, the fire had gone out of hers. She crumpled her sketch and flung it aside into the red dust of the gravel. "Oh, what for?" she cried, the despair breaking out for the first time. "To build three miles of railroad and abandon a transcontinental system!"

The two men were looking at her. She saw no reproach in their faces, only a look of understanding which was almost compassion.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly, dropping her eyes.

"If you change your mind," said Francisco, "I'll hire you on the

She raised her eyes, knowing that they knew the nature of her despair and that it was useless to hide her struggle. "I've tried it once," she said. "I've tried to give it up. I know what it will mean. I'll think of it with every cross-tie I'll see laid here, with every spike driven. I'll think of that other tunnel and

hear the whole course of the last agony of Taggart Transcontinental. You'll hear about every wreck. You'll hear about every discontinued train. You'll hear about every abandoned line. You'll hear about the collapse of the Taggart Bridge. Nobody stays in this valley except by a full, conscious choice based on a full, conscious knowledge of every fact involved in his decision. Nobody stays here by faking reality in any manner whatever."

She looked at him, her head lifted, knowing what chance he was

first time—she felt an enormous pride for the tight, clean face of man before her—he saw the shape of her mouth

self-control yet softened by some tremulous emotion while she  
answered quietly, "Thank you. You're right."

"You don't have to answer me now," he said. "You'll tell me  
when you've decided. There's still a week left."

"Yes," he said. "I'll be waiting."

"I decided it neatly and

decision consider  
everything about it  
by shingling roofs

find out where I

He smiled. "It was John who told me. The destroyer, remember?  
You wondered why the destroyer had not sent anyone after you.  
It was he who sent me there."

"He sent you?"

"Yes."

"What did he say to you?"

"Nothing much. Why?"

"What did he say? Do you remember the exact words?"

"Yes, I do remember. He said: 'If you want your chance, take it.'

"I turned to Galt with

John, I never quite

my chance?"

U. out—

Someone hailed him from the ledges of the mine and he went off  
swiftly as if the subject required no further attention.

She was

"I would have no chance till he'd had every chance possible to  
win."

"How did you know what he had earned?"

"I had been questioning him about you for ten years, every time I  
could, in every way, from every angle. No, he did not tell me—it  
was the way he spoke of you that did. He didn't want to speak, but  
he spoke too freely."

The hint of derision remained in his eyes; he knew that she  
wanted to hear this, but that this was not the answer to the  
question she feared.

She looked from his face to Francisco's approaching

hiding from herself any longer that her sudden heavy desolate anxiety was the fear that Galt might throw the three of them into the hopeless waste of self sacrifice

Francisco approached looking at her thoughtfully, as if weighing

back, it will be the last, for a long time" There was no reproach and no sadness in his voice, only some softened quality as evidence of emotion

back—but it won't live here permanently for years I'd like to move to my home except that I'd like you to

He said simply the three of them She felt some swift and almost vicious thrust her blindly into action

"But I'm an employee" she said, with an odd smile, looking at Galt "I have a job to finish."

"I won't hold you to it" said Galt, and she felt anger at the tone of his voice a tone that granted her no hidden significance and answered nothing but the literal meaning of her words "You can quit the job any time you wish It's up to you"

"No it isn't I'm a prisoner here Don't you remember? I'm to take orders I have no preferences to follow, no wishes to express no decisions to make I want the decision to be yours"

"You want it to be mine?"

"Yes"

"You've expressed a wish"

The mockery of his voice was in its seriousness—and she threw it

the defiance toward an adversary who was the sternest of teachers was all that Francisco had read in her face He shrugged regretfully but gaily "You're probably right. If you can't prevent her from going back—nobody can"

She was not hearing the magnitude of relief she knew, on she knew

here or return to the world, a week was like an endless

of time, either course seemed flooded by an unchanging sun-  
—and no struggle was hard, she thought, if *this* was the nature  
istence. The relief did not come from the knowledge that he  
not renounce her, nor from any assurance that she would win  
relief came from the certainty that he would always remain  
he was

don't know whether I'll go back to the world or not," she said  
ly, but her voice was trembling with subdued violence, which

ced at her and the glance was part amusement, part contemp-  
s reproach,

he did not answer, but looked at him in open, undefensive  
ussion.

He chuckled and looked away, and a few steps later said slowly,  
the tone of a quotation, "Nobody stays here by faking reality  
any manner whatever"

Part of the intensity of her relief—she thought, as she walked  
nly by his side—was the shock of a contrast she had seen, with  
ry perception, an exact  
would have meant, if  
up the woman he wanted,  
t feeling out of existence  
t the cost to him and to

1, then dragging the rest of his years through the waste of the  
reached and unfulfilled—she, turning for consolation to a second  
vice, faking a love she did not feel, being willing to fake, since her  
ill to self-deceit was the essential required for Galt's self sacrifice,  
an living out her years in hopeless longing, accepting, as relief for  
s unhealing wound, some moments of weary affection, plus the  
net that love is futile and happiness is not to be found on earth—  
ransisco, struggling in the elusive fog of a counterfeit reality, his  
fe a fraud staged by the two who were dearest to him and most  
rusted, struggling to grasp what was missing from his happiness,  
truggling down the brittle scaffold of a lie over the abyss of the dis-  
covery that he was not the man she loved, but only a resented sub-  
stitute, half-charity without half —

us dan  
he sho

into the  
sible to man—the three of them, who had had all the gifts of  
existence spread out before them, ending up as embittered bulks,  
who cry in despair that life is frustration—the frustration of  
being able to make unreality real

But this—she thought—was men's moral code in

a code that told them to act on the premise of one another's weakness, deceit and stupidity, and this was the pattern of their lives, the struggle through a fog of the pretended and unacknowledged, the belief that facts are not solid or final, this state where, denying any form to reality, men stumble through life, unreal and unformed

light heartedness of her relief came from the knowledge that a battle was hard, no decision was dangerous where there was no soggy uncertainty, no shapeless evasion to encounter

"Did it ever occur to you, Miss Taggart," said Galt, in the casual tone of an abstract discussion, but as if he had known her thoughts, "that there is no conflict of interests among men, neither in business nor in trade nor in their most personal desires—if they omit the irrational from their view of the possible and destruction from their view of the practical? There is no conflict, and no call for sacrifice, and no man is a threat to the aims of another—if men understand that reality is an absolute not to be faked, that lies do not work, that the unearned cannot be had, that the undeserved cannot be given, that the destruction of a value which is, will not bring value to that which isn't. The businessman who wishes to gain a market by throttling a superior competitor, the worker who wants a share of his employer's wealth, the artist who envies a rival's higher talent—they're all wishing facts out of existence, and destruction is the only means of their wish. If a market, a fortune or an immense production, employment and a be achieved, whether the sacrificial victims are willing or not, men will not cease to desire the impossible and will not lose their

change in the impersonal tone of his voice, "No one's happiness but my own is in my power to achieve or to destroy. You should have had more respect for him and for me than to fear what you had feared."

She did not answer, she felt as if a word would overflow the fullness of this moment, she merely turned to him with a look of acquiescence that

a walk through the country by two people who were free for the pleasure of motion and sunlight, with no unsolved burdens left to carry. Her sense of lightness blended with the weightless sense of walking downhill, as if she needed no effort to walk, only to restrain herself from flying, and she walked, fighting the speed of the down-

d pull, her body leaning back, the wind blowing her skirt like a  
to brake her motion

his wife—she thought, letting herself hear consciously the word  
Akston had not pronounced, the word she had long since felt,  
never named—for three weeks she had been his wife in every  
but one, and that final one was still to be earned, but this  
ch was real and today she could permit herself to know it, to feel  
in her flesh that —

up at her  
peared to  
was only  
that was  
Jug out that her mind was too full to notice She noticed it only

able were people at the doors of the shops and standing still all  
wn the street, looking up  
"Is . . . is anyone expected?" she asked and was astonished by  
e anxiety of her own voice  
"No" said Hammond "Everyone who's got any business here is  
in" was his

ainst the sun. "Not an army model"  
"Will the ray screen hold out?" she asked tensely, in a tone of  
fensive resentment against the approach of an enemy  
He chuckled "Hold out?"  
"Will he see us?"  
"That screen is safer than an underground vault, Miss Taggart.  
s you ought to know"  
The plane rose and for a moment —



the matter with her voice—but she was running across the road down the path to the airfield not knowing that she was running driven by a reason she had no time and no courage to name.

She found Dwight Sanders at the small telescope of the control tower—he was watching the plane attentively, with a puzzled frown.

"Let me see it!" she snapped.

She clutched the metal tube, she pressed her eye to the lens in her hand guiding the tube slowly to follow the plane—then he saw that her hand had stopped but her fingers did not open and her face remained bent over the telescope, pressed to the lens until he looked closer and saw that the lens was pressed to her forehead.

"What's the matter Miss Taggart?"

She raised her head slowly.

"Is it anyone you know, Miss Taggart?"

She did not answer. She hurried away, her steps rushing with the zigzagging aimlessness of uncertainty—she dared not run but she had to escape she had to hide, she did not know whether she was afraid to be seen by the men around her or by the plane above—the plane whose silver wings bore the number that belonged to Hank Rearden.

She stopped when she stumbled over a rock and fell and noticed that she had been running. She was on a small ledge in the cliff above the airfield hidden from the sight of the town open to the view of the sky. She rose her hands groping for support along the granite wall feeling the warmth of the sun on the rock under her palms—she stood her back pressed to the wall unable to move on to take her eyes off the plane.

The plane was circling slowly, dipping down then rising again struggling—she thought—as she had struggled, to distinguish the sight of a wreck in a hopeless spread of crevices and boulders an elusive spread neither clear enough to abandon nor to survey. He was searching for the wreck of her plane, he had not given up and whatever the three weeks of it had cost him, whatever he felt, the only evidence he would give to the world and his only answer was this steady insistent monotonous drone of a motor carrying a fragile craft over every deadly foot of an inaccessible chain of mountains.

Through the brilliant purity of the summer air, the plane seemed intimately close she could see it rock on precarious currents and bank under the thrusts of wind. She could see, and it seemed impossible that so clear a sight was closed to his eyes. The whole of the valley lay below him flooded by sunlight flaming with green pines and green lawns screaming to be seen—the end of his tortured quest the wreck of her plane.

all that he . . . . .  
before him . . . . .  
dive through . . . . .  
the capacity, to see "Hank!" she screamed waving her arms in a desperate signal "Hank!"

She fell back against the rock knowing that she had no way to reach him that she had no power to give him sight, that no power

on earth could pierce that screen except his own mind and vision. Suddenly and for the first time, she felt the screen, not as the most impenetrable, but as the most grimly absolute barrier in the world.

pped against the rock, she watched, in silent resignation, the as circles of the plane's struggle and its motor's uncomplaining it help, a cry she had no way to answer. The plane swooped abruptly, but it was only the start of its final rise, it cut a swift nal across the mountains and shot into the open sky. Then, caught in the spread of a lake with no shores and no exit, it sinking slowly and drowning out of sight.

And I!—she thought. If she left the valley the screen would be for her as tightly Atlantis would descend under a vault of more impregnable than the bottom of the ocean, and she, too, would be left to struggle for the things she had not known how to get. And she, too, would be left to fight a mirage of primordial savagery, the reality of all that she desired would never come again in her reach.

But the pull of the outer world, the pull that drew her to follow plane, was not the image of Hank Rearden—she knew that she

and if they knew that they left no value behind them—but until  
it unless she saw that no chance was untaken and no battle un-  
fought, she had no right to remain among them. This was the  
question that had lashed her for weeks, but had not driven her to a  
hurry of the answer.

She lay awake through the hours of that night, quietly motionless, following—like an engineer and like Hank Rearden—a process of impassionate, precise almost machi-

was not here to call

"Yes or no, Miss Taggart?"  
She looked at him.

She looked at the

Will gain a living re-

attenuated.

Professional

either are

Modas

FRANCOT

" 6,000 thousand miles away, at this

sunset hour, the page of a calendar was springing into light over the roofs of New York, saying June 28—and it seemed to her suddenly that she was seeing it, as if it were hanging over the heads of these men

"I have one more day," she said steadily "Will you let me have . . . of it

"We'll wait after that as well," said Hugh Akston, "though in your absence if that be necessary"

She stood by the window, facing them, and she felt a moment's satisfaction in the knowledge that she stood straight, that her hands did not tremble, that her voice sounded as controlled, uncomplaining and un pitying as theirs—it gave her a moment's feeling of a bond to them

"If any part of your uncertainty," said Galt, "is a conflict between your heart and your mind—follow your mind"

"Consider the reasons which make us certain that we are right," said Hugh Akston, "but not the fact that we are certain. If you are not convinced, ignore our certainty. Don't be tempted to substitute our judgment for your own"

"Don't rely on our knowledge of what's best for your future," said Mulligan. "We do know, but it can't be best until *you* know it."

"Don't consider our interests or desires," said Francisco. "You have no duty to anyone but yourself"

She smiled, neither sadly nor gaily, thinking that none of it was the sort of advice she would have been given in the outer world. And knowing how desperately they wished to help her where help was possible, she felt it was her part to give them reassurance

"I forced my way here," she said quietly, "and I was to be responsible for the consequences I'm bearing it"

Her reward was to see Galt smile—the smile was like a salute

well in an emergency, I'll be all right with her—and realized that she was thinking of herself

"Let it go till day after tomorrow, Miss Taggart," said Miss Mulligan. "Tonight you're still here"

"Thank you," she said

She remained by the window, while they went on discussing the valley's business, it was their closing conference of the month. They had just finished dinner—and she thought of her first dinner in this

ouse a month ago, she was wearing as she had then worn the gray

was an even deep deceptively clear blue that blended with the blue  
invisible clouds into a single spread hiding the sun only the  
flame and it  
thought  
he map of a

she heard Mulligan giving Galt the names of those who were not  
turning to the outer world "We have jobs for all of them" said  
Mulligan "In fact, there's only ten or twelve men who're going back  
a year—mostly to finish off, convert whatever they own and  
me here —"

"Yes" "Now the way things are going outside"

"Francisco" said Mulligan "you'll come back in a few months?"

"In November at the latest" said Francisco "I'll send you word  
short wave, when I'm ready to come back—will you turn the  
face on in my house?"

"I will" said Hugh Akston "And I'll have your supper ready  
you when you arrive"

"John, I take it for granted" said Mulligan "that you're not  
turning to New York this time"

Galt took a moment to glance at him then answered evenly "I  
ve not decided it yet"

She noticed the shocked swiftness with which Francisco and  
Mulligan bent forward to stare at him—and the slowness with  
which Hugh Akston's glance moved to his face Akston did not  
seem to be astonished

"You're not thinking of going back to that hell for another year  
you?" said Mulligan

"I am"

"But—good God John!—what for?"

"I'll tell you when I've decided"

"But there's nothing left there for you to do We got everybody  
knew of or can hope to know of Our list is completed except  
Hank Rearden—and we'll get him before the year is over—and  
Taggart if she so chooses That's all Your job is done There's  
nothing to look for out there—except the final crash when the roof  
falls down on their heads"

"I know it"

"John, yours is the one head I don't want to be there when it  
pens"

"You've never had to worry about me"

"But don't you realize what stage they're coming to? They're only  
step away from open violence—hell they've taken the step

sealed and declared it long ago—but in one more moment they see the full reality of what they've taken, exploding in their damnable faces—plain, open, blind, arbitrary, bloodshedding violence, run amuck, hitting anything and anyone at random. That's what I do want to see you in the midst of."

"I can take care of myself."

"John, there's no reason for you to take the risk," said Francisco.

"What risk?"

"The looters are worried about the men who've disappeared. They're suspecting something. You, of all people, shouldn't be there any longer. There's always a chance that they might discover just who and what you are."

"There's some chance. Not much."

"But there's no reason whatever to take it. There's nothing left that Ragnar and I can't finish."

Hugh Akston was watching them silently, leaning back in his chair, his face had that look of intensity, neither quite bitterness nor quite a smile, with which a man watches a progression that interests him, but that lags a few steps behind his vision.

"If I go back," said Galt, "it won't be for our work. It will be to win the only thing I want from the world for myself, now that the work is done. I've taken nothing from the world and I've wanted nothing. But there's one thing which it's still holding on to which is mine and which I won't let it have. No, I don't intend to break my oath, I won't deal with the looters, I won't be of any value or help to anyone out there, neither to looters nor neutrals—nor scabs. If I go, it won't be for anyone's sake but mine—and I don't think I'm risking my life, but if I am—well, I'm now free to risk it."

He was not looking at her, but she had to turn away and stand pressed against the window frame, because her hands were trembling.

"But, John!" cried Mulligan, waving his arm at the valley, "if anything happens to you, what would we—" He stopped abruptly and guiltily.

Galt chuckled. "What were you about to say?" Mulligan waved his hand sheepishly, in a gesture of dismissal. "Were you about to say that if anything happens to me, I'll die as the worst failure in the world?"

"All right," said Mulligan guiltily, "I won't say it. I won't say that we couldn't get along without you—we can. I won't beg you to stay here for our sake—I didn't think I'd ever revert to that rotten old plea, but, boy!—what a temptation it was, I can almost see why people do it. I know that whatever it is you want, if you wish to risk your life, that's all there is to it—but I'm thinking only that it's—oh God, John, it's such a valuable life!"

Galt smiled. "I know it. That's why I don't think I'm risking it—I think I'll win."

Francisco was now silent, he was watching Galt intently, with a frown of wonder, not as if he had found an answer, but as if he suddenly glimpsed a question.

"Look, John," said Mulhgan, "since you haven't decided whether all go—you haven't decided it yet, have you?"

"No not yet."

"Since you haven't, would you let me remind you of a few things just for you to consider?"

"Go ahead."

"It's the chance dangers that I'm afraid of—the senseless, undictable dangers of a world falling apart. Consider the physical world is of complex machinery in the hands of blind fools and fear red towards. Just think of their railroads—you'd be taking a chance on some such horror as that Winston tunnel incident every time you stepped aboard a train—and there will be more incidents that kind, coming faster and faster. They'll reach the stage where no day will pass without a major wreck."

"I know it."

" . . . very other industry, where  
 . . . which they thought could  
 . . . k explosions, blast furnaces  
 . . . ons, subway cave-ins and  
 . . . re very machines that had  
 . . . a continuous peril

"I know it."

"I know that you know it, but have you considered it in every civic detail? Have you allowed yourself to visualize it? I want you to see the exact picture of what it is that you propose to enter—before you decide whether anything can justify your entering it. You know that the cities will be hit worst of all. The cities were made for the railroads and will go with them."

"That's right."

"When the rails are cut, the city of New York will starve in two months. That's all the supply of food it's got. It's fed by a continent six thousand miles long. How will they carry food to New York? By truck and oxcart? But first, before it happens, they'll go through the whole of the agony—through the shrinking, the shortness, the hunger riots, the stampeding violence in the midst of the growing fullness."

"They will."

"They'll lose their airplanes first, then their automobiles, then their trucks then their horsecarts."

"They will."

"Their factories will stop, then their furnaces and their radios and their electric light system will go."

"It will."

"There's only a worn thread holding that continent together. There will be one train a day, then one train a week—then the Great Bridge will collapse and—"

"No, it won't!"

"It was her voice and they whirled to her. Her face was white, but calmer than it had been when she had answered them last."

Slowly, Galt rose to his feet and inclined his head, as in a verdict. "You have made your decision," he said

"I have"

"Dagny," said Hugh Akston, "I'm sorry." He spoke softly, with fort, as if his words were struggling and failing to fill the silence of the room. "I wish it were possible not to see this happen. I would have preferred anything—except to see you stay here by default of the courage of your convictions."

She spread her hands, palms out, her arms at her sides, a gesture of simple frankness, and said, addressing them all, her voice so calm that she could afford to show emotion, "I want you to know this. I have wished it were possible for me to die in one month, so that I could spend it in this valley. This is how much I wanted to remain. But so long as I choose to go on living, I will not desert a battle which I think is mine to fight."

"Of course," said Mulligan respectfully, "if you still think so."  
"If you want to know the one reason that's taking me back, I'll tell you. I cannot bring myself to abandon the destruction and greatness of the world, all that which was mine and yours, and which was made by us and is still ours by right—because I cannot be

of their minds. So long as men desire to live, I cannot join in the battle."

"Do they?" said Hugh Akston softly. "Do they desire it? No, but answer me now. I know that the answer was the hardest thing any of us to grasp and to accept. Just take that question back to you, as the last premise left for you to check."

"You're leaving as our friend," said Midas Mulligan, "and we'll be fighting everything you'll do, because we know you're right, but it's not you that we'll be damning."

"You'll come back," said Hugh Akston, "because your error is one of knowledge, not a moral failure, not an act of surrender to evil, but only the last act of being victim to your own weakness. We'll wait for you—and, Dagny, when you come back, you will have discovered that there need never be any conflict among desires, nor so tragic a clash of values as the one you've known so well."

"Thank you," she said, closing her eyes.

"We must discuss the conditions of your departure," said Hugh Akston. He spoke in the dispassionate manner of an executive. "First, you must give us your word that you will not disclose our secret, any part of it—neither our cause nor our existence nor this valley nor your whereabouts for the past month—to anyone in the world, not at any time or for any purpose whatsoever."

"I give you my word."

"Second, you must never attempt to find this valley again. We are not to come here uninvited. Should you break the first condition, it will not place us in serious danger. Should you break the second—it will. It is not our policy ever to be at the arbitrariness or the mercy of the good faith of another person, or at the mercy of a promise that cannot be enforced. Nor can we expect you to

interests above your own. Since you believe that your course  
right, the day may come when you may find it necessary to lead  
us to this valley. We shall therefore, leave you no means  
out. You will be taken out of the valley by plane blindfolded,  
you will be flown a distance sufficient to make it impossible  
or ever to retrace the course."

She inclined her head. "You are right."

"Our plane has been repaired. Do you wish to reclaim it by  
paying a draft on your account at the Mulligan Bank?"

"No."

"Then we shall hold it, until such time as you choose to pay for  
it. Day after tomorrow, I will take you in my plane to a point  
outside the valley and leave you within reach of further transpor-  
tation."

"I will need it."

"Yes."

The trail back  
to his cabin and  
areas of lighted

Jews hung scattered through the darkness, and the first streams  
that were weaving slowly across the panes like shadows cast  
on a distant sea. They walked in silence but the sound of their  
feet, blending into a single, steady beat, was like a speech to be  
heard and not to be uttered in any other form.

After a while, Francisco said, "It changes nothing. It only makes  
the span a little longer, and the last stretch is always the hardest—  
it's the last."

"I will hope so," she said. In a moment, she repeated quietly "The  
last is the hardest." She turned to Galt. "May I make one request?"  
"Yes."

"Will you let me go tomorrow?"  
"If you wish."

When Francisco spoke again, moments later it was as if he were  
breaching the unnamed wonder in her mind. His voice had the  
sound of answering a question. "Dagny, all three of us are in love"  
he jerked her head to him—"with the same thing, no matter what  
forms. Don't wonder why you feel no breach among us. You'll  
lose one of us, so long as you'll remain in love with your rails and  
your engines—and they'll lead you back to us, no matter how many  
times you lose your way. The only man never to be redeemed is  
the man without passion."

"Thank you," she said softly.

"For what?"

"For . . . for the way you sound."

"How do I sound? Name it, Dagny."

"You sound . . . as if you're happy."

"I am—in exactly the same way you are. Don't tell me what you  
feel."

"I will."

She nodded silently, unable to name as joy any part of the  
feeling, yet feeling that he was right.



Clots of mist were drifting like smoke across the moon and the diffused glow she could not distinguish the expressions of the faces as she walked between them the only expressions to perceive were the straight silhouettes of their bodies the unbroken soles of their steps and her own feeling that she wished to walk on and on a feeling she could not define except that it was neither doubt nor pain

When they approached his cabin Francisco stopped the gesture of his hand embracing them both as he pointed to his door "Will you come in—since it's to be our last night together for some time" Let's have a drink to the future of which all three of us are certain

Are we? she asked

Yes said Galt "we are"

She looked at their faces when Francisco switched on the light in his house She could not define their expressions it was not happiness or any emotion pertaining to joy their faces were taut and solemn but it was a glowing solemnity—she thought—doubtless these were possible and the odd glow she felt within her told her that her own face had the same look

Francisco reached for three glasses from a cupboard, but stopped as at a sudden thought He placed one glass on the table, then reached for the two silver goblets of Sebastián d'Anconima and placed them beside it

"Are you going straight to New York Dagny? he asked in the calm unstrained tone of a host bringing out a bottle of old wine

Yes she answered as calmly

I'm flying to Buenos Aires day after tomorrow" he said, uncorking the bottle I'm not sure whether I'll be back in New York later but if I am it will be dangerous for you to see me"

I won't care about that she said "unless you feel that I'm not entitled to see you any longer"

True Dagny You're not Not in New York"

He was pouring the wine and he glanced up at Galt John, when will you decide whether you're going back or staying here?"

Galt looked straight at him then said slowly in the tone of a man who knows all the consequences of his words I have decided, Francisco I'm going back

Francisco's hand stopped For a long moment he was seeing nothing but Galt's face Then his eyes moved to hers He put the bottle down and he did not step back but it was as if his glance drew back to a wider range to include them both

"But of course" he said

He looked as if he had moved still farther and were now seeing the whole spread of the years his voice had an even inflected sound a quality that matched the size of the vision

I knew it twelve years ago he said I knew it before you could have known and it's I who should have seen that you would see That night when you called us to New York I thought of it then as"—he was speaking to Galt but his eyes moved to Dagny

"as everything that you were seeking everything you told

is to live for or die, if necessary I should have seen that you would think it, too. It could not have been otherwise. It is as it had—and ought—to be. It was set then, twelve years ago." He looked at Galt and chuckled softly. "And you say that it's I who've taken the hardest beating?"

He turned with too swift a movement—then, too slowly, as if in deliberate emphasis, he completed the task of pouring the wine, filling the three vessels on the table. He picked up the two silver goblets, looked down at them for the pause of an instant, then

"But I have not earned it—and what you've paid, I'm paying it now, and I don't know whether I'll ever earn enough to hold clear title, but if hell is the price—and the measure—then let me be the greediest of the three of us."

As they drank, as she stood, her eyes closed, feeling the liquid motion of the wine inside her throat, she knew that for all three of them this was the most tortured—and the most exultant—moment they had ever reached.

She did not speak to Galt, as they walked down the last stretch of the trail to his house. She did not turn her head to him, feeling that even a glance would be too dangerous. She felt, in their silence, both the calm of a total understanding and the tension of the knowledge that they were not to name the things they understood.

But she faced him, when they were in his living room, with full confidence and as if in sudden certainty of a right—the certainty that she would not break and that it was now safe to speak. She said evenly, neither as plea nor as triumph, merely as the statement of a fact, "You are going back to the outer world because I will be there."

"Yes."

"I do not want you to go."

"You have no choice about it."

"You are going for my sake."

"No for mine."

"Will you allow me to see you there?"

"No."

"I am not to see you?"

"No."

"I am not to know where you are or what you do?"

"You're not."

"Will you be watching me, as you did before?"

"More so."

"Is your purpose to protect me?"

"No."

"What is it, then?"

"To be there on the day when you decide to join us"

She looked at him attentively, permitting herself no other action but as if groping for an answer to the first point she had not fully understood

"All the rest of us will be gone," he explained "It will be too dangerous to remain I will remain as your last key, before the door of this valley closes altogether"

"Oh!" She choked it off before it became a moan. Then, gaining the manner of impersonal detachment, she asked, "Suppose I were to tell you that my decision is final and that I am not to join you?"

"It would be a lie"

"Suppose I were now to decide that I wish to make it final and to stand by it no matter what the future?"

"No matter what future evidence you observe and what convictions you form?"

"Yes"

"That would be worse than a lie"

"You are certain that I have made the wrong decision?"

"I am"

"Do you believe that one must be responsible for one's own errors?"

"I do"

"Then why aren't you letting me bear the consequences of mine?"

"I am and you will"

"If I find when it is too late that I want to return to this valley—why should you have to bear the risk of keeping that door open to me?"

"I don't have to I wouldn't do it if I had no selfish end to gain"

"What selfish end?"

"I want you here"

She closed her eyes and inclined her head in open admission of defeat—defeat in the argument and in her attempt to face calmly the full meaning of that which she was leaving

Then she raised her head and, as if she had absorbed his frankness, she looked at him hiding neither her suffering nor her longing nor her calm, knowing that all three were in his glance

His face was as it had been in the sunlight of the moment when she had seen it for the first time—a face of merciless serenity and unflinching perceptiveness, without pain or fear or guilt. She thought that were it possible for her to stand looking at him, the straight lines of his eyebrows over the dark green eyes, the curve of the shadow underscoring the shape of his mouth, the poured metal planes of his skin in the open collar of his shirt and the casually immovable posture of his legs—she would wish to spend the rest of her life on this spot and in this manner. And in the next instant she knew that if her wish were granted, this contemplation would lose all meaning, because she would have rayed all the things that gave it value

Then, not as memory, but as an experience of the present, she felt herself reliving the moment when she had stood at the window of her room in New York, looking at a fogbound city, at the unhuman shape of Atlantis sinking out of reach—and she knew that she was now seeing the answer to that moment. She felt, not the words she had then addressed to the city, but that untranslated emotion from which the words had come. You, whom I have always loved and never found, you whom I expected to see at the end of the rails beyond the horizon—

Aloud, she said, "I want you to know this. I started my life with a single absolute: that the world was mine to shape in the image of my highest values and never to be given up to a lesser standard, no matter how long or how short the journey."

And a  
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low  
at the  
the  
misadventure—my love and my hope to reach you and my wish to be worthy of you on the day when I would stand before you face to face—"I am going back to fight for this valley—to release from its underground, to regain for it its full and rightful realm, let the earth belong to you in fact, as it does in spirit—and to let you again on the day when I'm able to deliver to you the sole of the world—or, if I fail, to remain in exile from this valley the end of my life"—but what is left of my life will still be yours, and I will go on in your name, even though it is a name I never to pronounce, I will go on serving you, even though I'm never to win, I will go on, to be worthy of you on the day when I could have met you, even though I won't—"I will fight for it, even if I have to fight against you, even if you damn me as a sinner . . . even if I am never to see you again."

He had stood without moving, he had listened with no change in his face, only his eyes had looked at her as if he were hearing every word even the words she had not pronounced. He answered, with the same look, as if the look were holding some circuit not to be broken, his voice catching some tone of hers, as if in the same code, a voice with no sign of emotion except in the spacing of the words.

If you fail, as men have failed in their quest for a vision that could have been possible, yet has remained forever beyond their grasp—if, like them, you come to think that one's highest values are not to be attained and one's greatest vision is not to be made—don't damn this earth, as they did, don't damn existence. I have seen the Atlantis they were seeking, it is here, it exists—one must enter it naked and alone, with no rags from the shreds of centuries, with the purest clarity of mind—not an ancient heart, but that which is much rarer: an intransigent one's only possession and key. You will not enter it, learn that you do not need to convince or to conquer. When you learn it, you will see that through all

of your struggle, nothing had barred you from Atlantis and there were no chains to hold . . .  
wear Through all those . . .  
was waiting for you"—he . . .  
the unspoken words in her mind—"waiting as unremittently as you were fighting as passionately, as desperately—but with a greater certainty than yours Go out to continue your struggle. Go on carrying unchosen burdens, taking undeserved punishment and believing that justice can be served by the offer of your own spirit to the most unjust of tortures But in your worst and darkest moments remember that you have seen another kind of work Remember that you can reach it whenever you choose to see Remember that it will be waiting and that it's real, it's possible—it's yours"

Then, turning his head a little, his voice as clear, but his eyes breaking the circuit he asked, "What time do you wish to leave tomorrow?"

"Oh . . . As early as it will be convenient for you"

"Then have breakfast ready at seven and we'll take off at eight I will"

He reached into his pocket and extended to her a small, shrunken disk which she could not distinguish at first He dropped it on the palm of her hand it was a five-dollar gold piece

"The last of your wages for the month," he said

Her fingers snapped closed over the coin too tightly, but she answered calmly and tonelessly, "Thank you"

"Good night, Miss Taggart"

"Good night"

She did not sleep in the hours that were still left to her She sat on the floor of her room, her face pressed to the bed, feeling nothing but the sense of his presence beyond the wall At times, she felt as if he were before her, as if she were sitting at his feet She spent her last night with him in this manner.

\* \*

She left the valley as she had come, carrying away nothing that belonged to it She left the few possessions she had acquired—a peasant skirt, a blouse, an apron, a few pieces of underwear—folded neatly in a drawer of the chest in her room She looked at them for a moment before . . .

The sun touched the peaks of the mountains, drawing a shimmering circle as a frontier of the valley—when she climbed aboard the plane She leaned back in the seat beside him and looked at Galt's face bent over her, as it had been bent when she had opened her eyes on the first morning Then she closed her eyes and felt his hands tying the blindfold across her face

She heard the blast of the motor, not as sound, but as the shock of an explosion inside her body, only it felt like a distant

adder, as if the person feeling it would have been hurt if she were so far away

She did not know when the wheels left the ground or when the plane crossed the circle of the peaks. She lay still, with the pound beat of the motor as her only perception of space, as if she were carried inside a current of sound that rocked once in a while. The sound came from his engine, from the control of his hands on the wheel, she held onto that, the rest was to be endured, not resisted.

She lay still, her legs stretched forward, her hands on the arms of the seat, with no sense of motion, not even her own, to give her a sense of time, with no space, no sight, no future with the night closed eyelids under the pressure of the cloth--and with the knowledge of his presence beside her as her single, unchanging reality.

They did not speak. Once, she said suddenly, "Mr. Galt."

"Yes?"

"No. Nothing. I just wanted to know whether you were still there."

"I will always be there."

She did not know for how many miles the memory of the sound of words seemed like a small landmark rolling away into the distance, then vanishing. Then there was nothing but the stillness of an indivisible present.

She did not know whether a day had passed or an hour, when she felt the downward, plunging motion which meant that they were about to land or to crash, the two possibilities seemed equal to her mind.

She felt the jolt of the wheels against the ground as an oddly layered sensation, as if some fraction of time had gone to make her believe it.

She felt the running streak of jerky motion, then the jar of the stop and of silence, then the touch of his hands on her hair, removing the blindfold.

She saw a glaring sunlight, a stretch of scorched weeds going up into the sky, with no mountains to stop it, a deserted highway and the hazy outline of a town about a mile away. She glanced at her watch, forty-seven minutes ago, she had still been in the city.

"You'll find a Taggart station there," he said, pointing at the town, "and you'll be able to take a train."

She nodded, as if she understood.

He did not follow her as she descended to the ground. He leaned across the wheel toward the open door of the plane, and they looked at each other. She stood, her face raised to him, a faint wind stirring her hair, the straight line of her shoulders sculptured by the trim suit of a business executive amidst the flat immensity of the empty prairie.

The movement of his hand pointed east, toward some distance. "Don't look for me out there," he said. "You will

me—until you want me for what I am And when you'll want me I'll be the easiest man to find "

She heard the sound of the door falling closed upon him it seems louder than the blast of the propeller that followed She watched the run of the plane's wheels and the trail of weeds left farthest behind them Then she saw a strip of sky between wheels and weeds

She looked around her A reddish haze of heat hung over the shapes of the town in the distance and the shapes seemed to stand under a rusty tinge above their roofs she saw the remnant of crumbled smokestack She saw a dry yellow scrap rustling faintly in the weeds beside her It was a piece of newspaper She looked at these objects blankly unable to make them real

She raised her eyes to the plane She watched the spread of its wings grow smaller in the sky draining away in its wake the van of its motor It kept rising wings first like a long silver oval then the curve of its motion went following the sky dropping slowly closer to the earth then it seemed not to move any longer but only to shrink She watched it like a star in the process of extinction while it shrank from cross to dot to a burning speck which she was no longer certain of seeing When she saw the spread of the sky was strewn with such sparks all over she knew that the plane was gone

### Chapter III ANTI GREED

"What am I doing here?" asked Dr Robert Stadler "Why was I asked to come here? I demand an explanation I'm not accustomed to being dragged halfway across a continent without rhyme reason or notice

Dr Floyd Ferris smiled Which makes me appreciate it all the more that you *did* come Dr Stadler "It was impossible to tell whether his voice had a tone of gratitude—or of gloating

The sun was beating down upon them and Dr Stadler felt a streak of rain

Three days It occurred to him that that was precisely the reason why his meeting with Dr Ferris had been delayed to this moment but he brushed the thought aside just as he brushed some insect buzzing to reach his wet temple

"Why was I unable to get in touch with you?" he asked The fraudulent weapon of sarcasm now seemed to sound less effective than ever but it was Dr Stadler's only weapon Why did you find it necessary to send me messages on official stationery worded in a style proper I'm sure for Army—orders he was about to say but didn't—"communications but certainly not for scientific correspondence?

"It is a government matter" said Dr Ferris gently

"Do you realize that I was much too busy and that this meant an interruption of my work?"

"Oh yes," said Dr Ferris noncommittally

"Do you realize that I could have refused to come?"

"But you didn't," said Dr Ferris softly

"Why was I given no explanation? Why didn't you come for me a person, instead of sending those incredible young hooligans with their mysterious gibberish that sounded half science, half pulp-magazine?"

"I was too busy," said Dr Ferris blandly

"Then would you mind telling me what you're doing in the middle of a plain in Iowa—and what I'm doing here, for that matter?" He waved contemptuously at the dusty horizon of an empty prairie and the three wooden grandstands. The stands were newly erected and the wood, too, seemed to perspire, he could see drops of resin sparkling in the sun

"We are about to witness an historical event, Dr Stadler. An occasion which will become a milestone on the road of science, civilization, social welfare and political adaptability" Dr Ferris' voice had the tone of a public relations man's memorized handout

"The turning point of a new era"

"What event? What new era?"

"As you will observe, only the most distinguished citizens the cream of our intellectual elite, have been chosen for the special privilege of witnessing this occasion. We could not omit your name, could we?—and we feel certain, of course, that we can count on your loyalty and cooperation"

He could not catch Dr Ferris' eyes. The grandstands were rapidly filling with people, and Dr Ferris kept interrupting himself constantly to wave to nondescript newcomers whom Dr Stadler had never seen before, but who were personages as he could tell by the particular shade of gaily informal deference in Ferris' waving. They all seemed to know Dr Ferris and to seek him out, as if he were the master of ceremonies—or the star—of the occasion

"If you would kindly be specific for a moment," said Dr Stadler "and tell me what—"

"Hi, Spud!" called Dr Ferris waving to a portly white haired man who filled the full-dress uniform of a general

Dr Stadler raised his voice "I said, if you would kindly concentrate long enough to explain to me what in hell is going on—"

"But it's very simple. It's the final triumph of You'll have to excuse me a minute, Dr Stadler," said Dr Ferris hastily, tearing forward, like an overtrained lackey at the sound of a bell in the direction of what looked like a group of aging rowdies. He turned back long enough to add two words which he seemed reverently to consider a full explanation "The press"

Dr Stadler sat down on the wooden bench feeling unaccountably reluctant to brush against anything around him. The three stands were spaced at intervals in a semi-curve like the tiers of a small private circus with room for some three hundred. They seemed built for the viewing of some spectacle—but



the emptiness of a flat prairie stretching off to the horizon, with nothing in sight but the dark blotch of a farmhouse miles away.

There were radio microphones in front of one stand which seemed reserved for the press. There was a contraption resembling a portable switchboard in front of the stand reserved for officials. A few levers of polished metal sparkled in the sun on the face of the switchboard. In an improvised parking lot behind the stand the glitter

But it was  
away that  
small square  
walls no

and a large dome grotesquely too heavy for the job, used to press the structure down into the soil. A few outlets protruded from the base of the dome in loose irregular shapes resembling badly poured clay funnels; they did not seem to belong to an industrial age or to any known usage. The building had an air of silent malevolence like a puffed venomous mushroom. It was obviously modern but its sloppy rounded, ineptly unspecific lines made it look like a primitive structure unearthed in the heart of the jungle devoted to some secret rites of savagery.

Dr. Stadler sighed with irritation. He was tired of secrets. "Confidential" and "Top Confidential" had been the words stamped on the invitation which had demanded that he travel to Iowa on a two-day notice and for an unspecified purpose. Two young men, who called themselves physicists, had appeared at the Institute to escort him; his calls to Ferris' office in Washington had remained unanswered. The young men had talked—through an exhausting trip by government plane, then a clammy ride in a government car—about science, emergencies, social equilibriums and the need of secrecy till he knew less than he had known at the start. He noticed only that two words kept recurring in their jabber, which had also appeared in the text of the invitation: two words that had an ominous sound when involving an unknown issue, the demands for his loyalty and cooperation.

The young men had deposited him on a bench in the front row of the grandstand and had vanished like the folding gear of a mechanism, leaving him to the sudden presence of Dr. Ferris in person. Now, watching the scene around him, watching Dr. Ferris' vague excited loosely casual gestures in the midst of a group of newsmen, he had an impression of bewildering confusion of senseless chaotic inefficiency—and of a smooth machine working to produce the exact degree of that impression needed at the exact moment.

He felt a single sudden flash of panic, in which, as in a flash of lightning, he permitted himself to know that he felt a desperate desire to escape. But he slammed his mind shut against it. He knew that the darkest secret of the occasion—more crucial, more untouchable, more deadly than whatever was hidden in the mushroom building—was that which had made him agree to come.

He would never have to learn his own motive, he thought; he

ght it, not by means of words, but by means of the brief, spasmodic of an emotion that resembled irritation and felt like a spasm. The words that stood in his mind, as they had stood when he had agreed to come were like a voodoo formula which one must not look at when it is needed and beyond which one must not look.

"Can you do when you have to deal with people?" he noticed that the stand reserved for those whom Ferris had called the intellectual elite was larger than the stand prepared for prominent officials. He caught himself feeling a swift little sneaking pleasure at the thought that he had been placed in the front. He turned to glance at the men behind him. The sensation he experienced was like a small, gray shock that faded, random, faded, worn assembly was not his conception of an intellectual. He saw defensively belligerent men and tastelessly dressed men—he saw mean, rancorous, suspicious faces that bore the mark incompatible with a standard bearer of the intellect. He saw a mark of uncertainty. He could find no face he knew no face recognize as famous and none likely ever to achieve such recognition. He wondered by what standard these people had been judged.

Then he noticed a gangling figure in the second row, the figure of an elderly man with a long, slack face that seemed faintly familiar to him, though he could recall nothing about it, except a vague memory, as of a photograph seen in some unsavory location. He leaned toward a woman and asked, pointing, "Would you tell me the name of that gentleman?" The woman answered.

"He is a tourist guide, and declaring, when they are asked to be heard, 'But why should you waste your time on me, to there is the source of today's achievement, the man who made it all possible—Dr. Robert Stadler!'"

It seemed to him for an instant that he saw an incongruous look on the worn, cynical faces of the newsmen, a look that was not of respect, expectation or hope, but more like an echo of these, a faint reflection of the look they might have worn in their youth on hearing the name of Robert Stadler. In that instant, he felt an impulse which he would not acknowledge the impulse to tell her that he knew nothing about today's event, that his power was rated for her to see that he had been brought here as a pawn.

"... private interests or personal greed, it is devoted to the welfare of mankind, to the good of humanity as a whole—" spouting, telephone, the sickening generalities he had heard from Dr. F.

He would not permit himself to know that what he felt was loathing, he identified the emotion, but not its object; it was loathing for the men around him, he thought; it was they who were forcing him to go through this shameful performance. What can you do, he thought—when you have to deal with people?

The newsmen were not at all to be feared. They now had the feeling that they were dealing with an automaton.

"Dr. Stadler," asked one of them, pointing at the building on Knoll "is it true that you consider Project X the greatest achievement of the State Science Institute?"

There was a dead drop of silence.

"Project X?" said Dr. Stadler.

He knew that something was ominously wrong in the tone of voice because he saw the heads of the newsmen go up in the sound of an alarm; he saw them waiting, their pencils poised.

For one instant, while he felt the muscles of his face crackling with the fraud of a smile, he felt a formless, an almost supernatural terror, as if he sensed again the silent working of some great machine, as if he were caught in it, part of it and doing its revocable will. "Project X?" he said softly, in the mysterious way of a conspirator. "Well, gentlemen, the value—and the moment—any achievement of the State Science Institute are not to be doubted, since it is a non-profit venture—need I say more?"

less telling—and more impudent.

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Dr. Stadler turned to Ferris. "What is Project X?" he asked sternly.

Dr. Ferris smiled in a manner of innocence and insolence together. "A non-profit venture," he answered—and went running off to meet the newcomers.

From the respectful whispers of the crowd, Dr. Stadler learned that the little man in a . . .

A group came closer and he saw Ferris steering them in the direction. "Mr. Thompson," said . . . they approached.

Dr. Stadler . . . fraction of a second . . . the sight of a phenomenon from a mystical realm forever incomprehensible to Mr. Thompson—and they had the piercing, calculated



at intervals into the ground

And it was discovered," said Dr Ferris, "that there are certain frequencies of sound vibration which no structure, organic or inorganic, can withstand . . ."

Dr Stadler noticed a silvery spot bouncing over the weeds among the herd. It was a kid that had not been chained, it kept leaping and weaving about its mother.

"The sound ray is controlled by a panel inside the gun underground laboratory," said Dr Ferris, pointing at the building on the knoll. That panel is known to us affectionately as the 'Xylophone—because one must be darn careful to strike the right keys, or, rather, to pull the right levers. For this special occasion an extension Xylophone, connected to the one inside, has been erected here'—he pointed to the switchboard in front of the official stand—'so that you may witness the entire operation and see the simplicity of the whole procedure. . . ."

Dr Stadler found pleasure in watching the kid, a soothing reassuring kind of pleasure. The little creature seemed barely a week old. It looked like a ball of white fur with graceful long legs, it kept bounding in a manner of deliberate, gaily ferocious awkwardness, all four of its legs held stiff and straight. It seemed to be leaping at the sunrays, at the summer air, at the joy of discovering its own existence.

The sound ray is . . . controllable

in re  
you  
two  
beyond

able . . . says to cover—through the outlets which may observe under the dome—the entire countryside within a radius of a hundred miles, a circle with a periphery extending from the shore of the Mississippi, roughly from the bridge of the Taggart Transcontinental Railroad, to Des Moines and Fort Dodge, Iowa, to Austin, Minnesota, to Woodmen, Wisconsin, to Oak Island, Illinois. This is only a modest edge to build generate miles—but due to the sufficient . . .

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yster had had as little to do with the Project as any of the movie  
sher attendants that he possessed neither the mind nor the initia  
ve nor even the sufficient degree of malice to cause a new gopher  
ap to be brought into the world, that he too was only the pawn of  
silent machine—a machine that had no center no leader no direc

he pawns each to the degree of his evil Dr Stadler gripped the  
dge of the bench he felt a desire to leap to his feet and run

As to the function and the purpose of the sound ray I shall  
ay nothing I shall let it speak for itself You will now see it work  
When Dr Blodgett pulls the levers of the Xylophone I suggest that  
ou keep your eyes on the target—which is that farmhouse two  
miles away There will be nothing else to see The ray itself is in  
visible It has long been conceded by all progressive thinkers that  
here are no entities only actions—and no values only conse  
quences Now ladies and gentlemen you will see the action and the  
consequences of the Thompson Harmonizer

Dr Stadler

microphone and  
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the switchboard  
son Mr Thomp  
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undulating  
eliminate motion of Dr Blodgett's hand as it pulled the first lever  
of the switchboard then the next He raised his field glasses and  
looked at the

pulling at its  
ext instant the  
ward and jerk  
in convulsions

the pile was motionless except  
for one beast's leg sticking out of the mass stiff as a rod and shaking  
as in a strong wind The farmhouse tore into strips of clapboard  
and went down followed by a geyser of the bricks of its chimney  
The tractor vanished into a pancake The water tower cracked and  
its shreds hit the ground while its wheel was still describing a long  
curve through the air as if of its own leisurely volition The steel  
beams and girders of the solid new trestle collapsed like a structure  
of matchwood

tested, it

was not

nightmare

single it

He moved to

trap

escape

He was looking at  
the data  
loud

A single, high, thin scream rose from the tiers behind him as some woman fainted. He wondered why she should scream so late after the fact—and then he realized that the time elapsed since the touch of the first lever was not a full minute.

He raised his field glasses again, almost as if he were suddenly hoping that the cloud shadow would be all he would see. But the material objects were still there, they were a mount of refuse. He moved his glasses over the wreckage, in a moment, he realized that he was looking for the kid. He could not find it, there was nothing but a pile of gray fur.

When he lowered the glasses and turned, he found Dr Ferris looking at him. He felt certain that through the whole of the test, it was not the target, it was his face that Ferris had watched, as if to see whether he, Robert Stadler, could withstand the ray.

"That's all there is to it," the fatish Dr Blodgett announced through the microphone, in the ingratiating sales tone of a department store floorwalker. "There is no nail or rivet remaining in the frame of the structures and there is no blood vessel left unbroken in the bodies of the animals."

The crowd was rustling with jerky movements and high pitched whispers. People were looking at one another, rising uncertainly and dropping down again, restlessly demanding anything but the pause. There was a sound of submerged hysteria in the whispers. They seemed to be waiting to be told what to think.

Dr Stadler saw a woman being escorted down the steps from the back row, her head bent, a handkerchief pressed to her mouth; she was sick at her stomach.

He turned away and saw that Dr Ferris was still watching him. Dr Stadler leaned back a little, his face austere and scornful, the face of the nation's greatest scientist, and asked, "Who invented that ghastly thing?"

"You did."

Dr Stadler looked at him, not moving.

"It is merely a practical appliance," said Dr Ferris pleasantly, "based upon your theoretical discoveries. It was derived from your invaluable research into the nature of cosmic rays and of the spatial transmission of energy."

"Who worked on the Project?"

"A few third raters, as you would call them. Really, there was very little difficulty. None of them could have begun to conceive of the first step toward the concept of your energy transmission formula, but given that—the rest was easy."

"What is the practical purpose of this invention? What are the

s"

It will set the country free from the fear of aggression and permit it to plan its future in undisturbed safety." His voice had an odd carelessness, a tone of offhand improvisation, as if he were neither expecting nor attempting to be believed. "It will relieve social in-

s It will promote peace stability and—as we have indicated—  
mony It will eliminate all danger of war  
What war? What aggression? With the whole world starving  
all those People's States barely subsisting on handouts from  
country—where do you see any danger of war? Do you expect  
se ragged savages to attack you?

Dr Ferris looked straight into his eyes "Internal enemies can  
■ great a danger to the people as external ones he answered  
rhaps greater This time his voice sounded as if he expected  
l was certain to be understood "Social systems are so precarious  
; think of what stability could be achieved by a few scientific  
allations at strategic key points It would guarantee a state

icked past  
n to look  
sees that

u the man known had known from the last man spent years  
-d in a contest between the  
"I don't know what you're

man or greedy industrialist  
d softly in the tone of an  
have afforded it Its an

ous investment with no prospect of material gain What profit  
uld he expect from it? There are no profits henceforth to be  
rived from that farm He pointed at the dark strip in the distance.  
lut, as you have so well observed Project X had to be a non-  
ofit venture Contrary to a business firm the State Science Insti-  
te had no trouble in obtaining funds for the Project You have  
it heard of the Institute having any financial difficulties in the past  
o years have you? And it used to be such a problem—getting  
em to vote the funds necessary for the advancement of science  
hey always demanded gadgets for their cash as you used to say  
fell here was a gadget which some people in power could fully  
ppreciate They got the others to vote for it It wasn't difficult In  
ict a great many of those others felt safe in voting money for a  
roject that was secret—they felt certain it was important since  
hey were not considered important enough to be let in on it There  
ere of course a few skeptics and doubters But they gave in when  
hey were reminded that the head of the State Science Institute was  
Dr Robert Stadler—whose judgment and integrity they could not  
doubt."

Dr Stadler was looking down at his fingernails

The sudden screech of the microphone jerked the crowd into an  
instantaneous attentiveness people seemed to be a second's worth of  
self-control away from panic An announcer with a voice like a  
machine gun spitting smiles barked cheerily that they were now  
to witness the radio broadcast that would break the news of the  
Great discovery to the whole nation Then with a glance at  
watch, his script and the signaling arm of Wesley Mouch he  
into the sparkling snake head of the microphone—into



rooms the offices, the studies, the nurseries of the country "La-

project in the country at this precarious time, then would be accidentally, as a semi-joke, "that there be no criticism of anything at any time"

"—and the nations political, cultural, intellectual and moral leaders," the announcer was yelling into the microphone, "who have witnessed this great event as your representatives and in your name, will now tell you their views of it in person"

Mr Thompson was the first to mount the wooden steps to the platform of the microphone He snapped his way through a brief speech hailing a new era and declaring—in the belligerent tone of a challenge to unidentified enemies—that science belonged to all people and that every man on the face of the globe had a right to share of the advantages created by technological progress

Wesley Mouch came next He spoke about social planning and the necessity of unanimous rallying in support of the planners He spoke about discipline, unity, austerity and the patriotic duty of bearing temporary hardships "We have mobilized the best brains of the country to work for your welfare This great invention was the product of the genius of a man whose humanity is not to be underestimated by the greatest mind of the century"

"What?" gasped I

Dr Ferris looked

"He didn't ask me"

snapped half-whispered

Dr Ferris spread out his hands in a gesture of reproachful helplessness "Now you see Dr Stadler is not a man to be allowed to allow yourself to be always considered a fool see it is not Mr "

The figure now slouching against the sky on the speakers' platform, coiling itself about the microphone, talking in the bored, contemptuous tone of an off-color story, was Dr Simon Pritchett He was declaring that the new invention was an instrument of social welfare which guaranteed general prosperity, and that anyone who doubted this self-evident fact was an enemy of society, to be treated accordingly "This invention, the product of Dr Robert Stadler, the pre-eminent lover of freedom—"

Dr Ferris opened a briefcase, produced some pages of neatly typed material, and began to read the first page of the hour His eyes were fixed on the paper

Dr Stadler took the pages, but held them

o straight fingers as one might hold a scrap of waste paper about  
be tossed aside "I haven't asked you to appoint yourself as my  
not writer" he said. The sarcasm of the voice gave Ferris his  
re this was not a moment for sarcasm

"I couldn't have allowed your invaluable time to be taken up by  
a writing of radio speeches," said Dr Ferris "I felt certain that  
u would appreciate it." He said it in a tone of spurious politeness  
tended to be recognized as spurious, the tone of tossing to a  
eggar the alms of face-saving

Dr Stadler's answer disturbed him. Dr Stadler did not choose to  
swer or to glance down at the manuscript.

"Lack of faith," a beefy speaker was snarling on the platform, in  
a tone of a street brawl, "lack of faith is the only thing we got  
fear! If we have faith in the plans of our leaders why, the plans  
ll work and we'll all have prosperity and ease and plenty. It's the  
llows who go around doubting and destroying our morale, it's they  
ho're keeping us in shortages and misery. But we're not going to  
t them do it much longer, we're here to protect the people—and if  
oy of those doubting smarties come around, believe you me, we'll  
de care of them!"

"It would be unfortunate," said Dr Ferris in a soft voice, "to  
pre . . . . ."

lous, "this invention is a great, new instrument of peace. It will  
roject us from the aggressive designs of selfish enemies. It will  
flow us to breathe freely and to learn to love our fellow men."  
he had a heavy frown . . . . .

Y . . . . . science and love!"

Dr Stadler looked at the faces in the grandstands. They were  
sitting quietly now, they were listening but their eyes had an ebbing  
ook of twilight, a look of fear in the process of being accepted as  
permanent, the look of raw wounds being dummed by the veil of  
infection. They knew, as he knew it, that they were the targets of  
the shapeless funnels protruding from the mushroom buildings  
lone—and he wondered in what manner they were now extinguish-  
ing their minds and escaping that knowledge. He knew that the  
words they were eager to absorb and believe were the chains slip-  
ping in to hold them, like the goats, securely within the range of  
those funnels. They were eager to believe. He saw the tightening  
lines of their lips. He saw the occasional glances of suspicion they  
threw at their neighbors—as if the horror that threatened them  
not the sound ray, but the men who would make them acknow-  
it as horror. Their eyes were veiling over, but the remnant  
a wound was a cry for help.

"Why do you think they think?" said Dr Ferris softly. "Reason is the scientist's only weapon—and reason has no power over me has it? At a time like ours, with the country falling apart, with a mob driven by blind desperation to the edge of open riots and violence—order must be maintained by any means available. What can we do when we have to deal with people?"

Dr Stadler did not answer.

A fat, jellied woman, with an inadequate brassière under a dark perspiration stained dress, was saying into the microphone—Dr Stadler could not believe, it at first—that the new invention was to be greeted with p . . . . . the . . . of the country

Dr Stadler  
but the noble  
ness at the con

Suddenly, w  
face him. It w  
wound that h

pain, in horror, in sincerity, as if, for that moment, both he and Ferris were human beings, while he moaned with incredulous despair.

"In a civilized century, Ferris, in a civilized century!"

Dr Ferris took his time to produce and prolong a soft chuckle. "I don't know what you're talking about," he answered in the tone of a quotation.

Dr Stadler lowered his eyes.

When Ferris spoke again, his voice had the farthest edge of a tone which Stadler could not define, except that it did not belong in any civilized discussion. "It would be unfortunate if anything were to happen to jeopardize the State Science Institute. It would be most unfortunate if the Institute were to be closed—or if any one of us were to be forced to leave it. Where would we go? Scientists are an inordinate luxury these days—and there aren't many people or establishments left who're able to afford necessities, let alone luxuries. There are no doors left open to us. We wouldn't be welcome in the research department of an industrial concern, such as—let us say—Rearden Steel. Besides, if we should happen to make enemies, the same enemies would be feared by any person tempted to employ our talents. A man like Rearden would have fought for us. Would a man like Orren Boyle? But this is purely theoretical

anachronism  
in our  
tinue  
Pritchett  
able or



the failing to stop him. Dr Stadler!" he cried in a desperate whisper. "Tell them the truth! Tell them that you had nothing to do with it! Tell them what sort of infernal machine it is and for what purpose it's intended to be used! Tell the country what sort of people are trying to rule it! Nobody can doubt your word! Tell them the truth. Save us! You're the only one who can!"

Dr Stadler looked down at him. He was young, his movement and voice had that swift sharp clarity which belongs to competence among his aged, corrupt, favor-ridden and pull-created colleagues. He had managed to achieve the rank of elite of the political press by means and in the role of a last irresistible spark of ability. His eyes had the look of an eager, unfrightened intelligence. They were the kind of eyes Dr Stadler had seen looking up at him from the benches of classrooms. He noticed that this boy's eyes were hazel; they had a tinge of green.

Dr Stadler turned his head and saw that Ferris had come running to his side like a servant or a jailer. "I do not expect to be insulted by disloyal young punks with treasonable motives," said Dr Stadler loudly.

Dr Ferris whirled upon the young man and snapped his face into a look of control distorted by rage at the unexpected and unpleasant.

"Give me your press card and your work permit!"

I am proud. Dr Robert Stadler read into the microphone into the attentive silence of a nation "that my years of work in the service of science have brought me the honor of placing into the hands of our great leader Mr Thompson a new instrument with an incalculable potential for a civilizing and liberating influence upon the mind of man."

\* \* \*

The sky had the stagnant breath of a furnace and the streets of New York were like pipes running not with air and light but with melted dust. Dagny stood on a street corner where the airport had left her looking at the city in passive astonishment. The buildings seemed worn by weeks of summer heat but the people seemed worn by centuries of anguish. She stood watching the disarmed by an enormous sense of unreality.

That sense of unreality had been her only feeling since the early hours of the morning—since the moment when at the end of an empty highway she had walked into an unknown town and stopped the first passer by to ask where she was.

"Watsonville," he answered. "What state, please?" she asked. The man glanced at her, said "Nebraska," and walked away. She smiled mirthlessly, knowing that he wondered where she had come from and that no explanation he could imagine would be as fantastic as the truth. Yet it was Watsonville that seemed so fantastic to her as she walked through its streets to the railroad station. She had lost the habit of observing despair as the normal, dominant aspect of human existence so normal as to become unnoticed—and the sight of it struck her in all of its senseless fullness. He was seeing the brand of pain and fear on the faces of people.

the look of evasion that refuses to know it—they seemed to be  
going through the motions of some enormous pretense acting out a  
plot to ward off reality, letting the earth remain unseen and their  
lives un-lived, in dread of something namelessly forbidden—yet  
the forbidden was the simple act of looking at the nature of their  
life and questioning their duty to bear it. She was seeing it so  
clearly that she

and then she remembered that  
son was the one power they had banished from their existence.  
she did not

ished — a deserter

The wording of the paragraph suggested that her disappearance  
had been a prominent public issue not yet dropped. There were  
no suggestions of it—a mention of Miss Taggart's tragic death  
a story about the growing number of plane crashes—and, on the  
front page an ad offering a \$100,000 reward to the person who  
would find the wreckage of her plane signed by Henry Rearden.  
The last gave her a stab of urgency, the rest seemed meaningless.  
Then, slowly she realized that her return was a public event which  
would be taken as big news. She felt a lethargic weariness at the  
spect of a dramatic homecoming of facing him and the press of  
meeting the excitement. She wished they would get it over with in  
her absence.

At the airfield she saw a small town reporter interviewing some  
military officials. She waited till he had finished then she ap-  
proached him, extended her credentials and said quietly to the  
stare of his eyes "I'm Dagny Taggart. Would you make it  
known, please, that I'm alive and that I'll be in New York this  
afternoon?" The plane was about to take off and she escaped the  
necessity of answering questions.

She watched the prairies, the rivers, the towns slipping past at an  
unreachable distance below—and she noted that the sense of detach-  
ment one feels when looking at the earth from a plane was the same  
as she felt when looking at people—only her distance from people  
seemed longer.

The passengers were listening to some radio broadcast which  
seemed to be important judging by their earnest attention.  
Only brief snatches of fraudulent voices talking about

of new invention that was to bring some undefined benefits to an undefined public's welfare. The words were obviously chosen to convey no specific meaning whatever, she wondered how one could pretend that one was hearing a speech, yet that was what the performers were doing. . . . a child who, not anything he wished the incomprehensible knows that he is playing a game, these people pretend to think themselves that they are not pretending, they know no other state of existence.

The sense of unreality remained as her only feeling when she landed, when she escaped a crowd of reporters without being seen—by avoiding the taxi stands and leaping into the airport bus—when she rode on the bus, then stood on a street corner, looking at New York. She felt as if she were seeing an abandoned city.

She felt no sense of homecoming, when she entered her apartment, the place seemed to be a convenient machine that she could use for some purpose of no significance whatever.

But she felt a quickened touch of energy, like the first break in a fog—a touch of meaning—when she picked up the telephone receiver and called Rearden's office in Pennsylvania.

'Oh, Miss Taggart.' Miss Taggart said, in a joyous mood, the voice of the severe, unemotional Miss Ives.

'Hello, Miss Ives. I haven't startled you, have I? You know I was alive?'

'Oh yes! I heard it on the radio this morning.'

'Is Mr. Rearden in his office?'

'No, Miss Taggart. He . . . he's in the Rocky Mountains, searching for . . . that is . . .'

'Yes, I know. Do you know where we can reach him?'

'I expect to hear from him at any moment. He's stopping in Los Gatos, Colorado, right now. I phoned him, the moment I heard the news, but he was out and I left a message for him to call me when he's out flying most of the day . . . but he'll call me when he comes back to the hotel.'

'What hotel is it?'

'The Eldorado Hotel, in Los Gatos.'

'Thank you, Miss Ives.' She was about to hang up.

'Oh, Miss Taggart.'

'Yes?'

'What was it that happened to you? Where were you?'

'I . . . I'll tell you when I see you. I'm in New York now. When Mr. Rearden calls, tell him please that I'll be in my office.'

'Yes, Miss Taggart.'

She hung up, but her hand remained on the receiver, clinging to her first contact with a matter that had importance. She looked at her apartment and at the city in the window, feeling reluctant to sink again into the dead fog of the meaningless.

She raised the receiver and called Los Gatos.

'Eldorado Hotel,' said a woman's drowsily resentful voice.

Would you take a message for Mr Henry Rearden? Ask him when he comes in, to—"

"Just a minute please," drawled the voice in the impatient tone that resents any effort as an imposition

he heard the clicking of switches some buzzing, some breaks of noise and then a man's clear, firm voice answering "Hello? It's Hank Rearden."

He stared at the receiver as at the muzzle of a gun feeling paralyzed, unable to breathe

"Hello?" he repeated

"Hank is that you?"

He heard a low sound more a sigh than a gasp and then the empty crackling of the wire

"Hank!" There was no answer "Hank!" she screamed in terror she thought she heard the effort of a breath—then she heard a whisper which was not a question, but a statement saying every thing "Dagny"

"Hank I'm sorry—oh, darling I'm sorry!—didn't you know?"

"Where are you Dagny?"

"Are you all right?"

"Of course."

"Didn't you know that I was back and and alive?"

"No I didn't know it"

"Oh God, I'm sorry I called I—"

"What are you talking about? Dagny where are you?"

"In New York Didn't you hear about it on the radio?"

"No I've just come in."

"Didn't they give you a message to call Miss Ives?"

"No"

"Are you all right?"

"Now?" she heard his soft low chuckle She was hearing the sound of unreleased laughter the sound of youth growing in his voice with every word. "When did you come back?"

"This morning"

"Dagny where were you?"

She did not answer at once "My plane crashed" she said. "In the Rockies I was picked up by some people who helped me but I could not send word to anyone"

The laughter went out of his voice "As bad as that?"

"Oh oh the crash? No, it wasn't bad I wasn't hurt. Not seriously"

"Then why couldn't you send word?"

"There were no no means of communication"

"Why did it take you so long to get back?"

"I can't answer that now"

"Dagny were you in danger?"

The half-smiling half bitter tone of her voice was almost reproachful she answered "No"

"Were you held prisoner?"

"No—not really"

"Then you could have returned sooner but didn't?"



"That's true—but that's all I can tell you."

"Where were you Dagny?"

Do you mind if we don't talk about it now? Let's wait until we see you."

Of course I won't ask any questions. Just tell me are you safe now?

Safe? Yes."

I mean have you suffered any permanent injuries or consequences?"

She answered with the same sound of a cheerless smile "I'm—no Hank I don't know as to the permanent consequences."

"Will you still be in New York tonight?"

"Why yes I'm I'm back for good."

"Are you?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"I don't know I guess I'm too used to what it's like when I can't find you."

"I'm back."

"Yes I'll see you in a few hours." His voice broke off as if the sentence were too enormous to believe. "In a few hours," he repeated firmly.

"I'll be here."

Dagny—

"Yes?"

W. L.

■ hear you  
can I don't

A. M. L.

"When I see you my darling So long."

She stood looking at the silent receiver. For the first time on her return she felt pain—a violent pain—but it made her alive because it was worth feeling.

She telephoned her secretary at Taggart Transcontinental and briefly that she would be in the office in half an hour.

The statue of Nathaniel Taggart was real—when she stood in it in the concourse of the Terminal. It seemed to her that she was alone in a vast, echoing temple with fog coils of fog ghosts weaving and vanishing around them. She stood still looking up at the statue as for a brief moment of dedication. "I'm back" were the only words she had to offer.

Dagny Taggart was still the inscription on the frosted panel of the door to her office. The look on the faces of her people as she entered the anteroom was the look of drowning people at the sight of a lifeline. She saw Eddie Willers standing at his desk in his glass enclosure with some man before him. Eddie moved in her direction but stopped; he looked imprisoned. She met her glance greet every face in turn smiling at them gently at the doomed children then walked toward Eddie's desk.

Eddie was watching her approach as if he were seeing no one else in the world but his rigid posture seemed designed to protect her but he was listening to the man before him.

"Motive power?" the man was saying in a voice that had a brusque staccato snap and a spurred nasal drawl together "There's no problem about motive power. You just take—

"Hello," said Eddie softly, with a muted smile as to a distant vision.

The man turned to glance at her. He had a yellow complexion, curly hair, a hard face made of soft muscles and the revolting handsomeness belonging to the esthetic standards of barroom cobs. His blurred brown eyes had the empty flatness of glass.

"Miss Taggart," said Eddie in a resonant tone of severity the

to a ~~short~~ <sup>substitute</sup> for tomorrow and Tuesday and shoot the pictures

Eddie did not answer

his eyes were capable of seeing. "Send the orders,"

He raised his eyes to her, as though exhausted by hours of beating "We'll have to, Dagny," he said his voice dead.

"What is that?" she asked pointing at the outer door that had closed on Mr Meigs

"The Director of Unification"  
"The Director of Unification"

1997

\*The Washington representative, in charge of the Railroad Union Section Plan.

"What's that?"

Oh, wait, Dagny, are you all right? Were you hurt?

She had never imagined what the face of Eddie Willers would look like in the future. He was seeing it now—aging, a matter of muscles accepted.

is useless

She smiled, gently and confidently in understanding in dismissal of all problems, and said extending her hand, "All right Eddie. Hello."

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips a thing he had never done before his manner neither during nor afterwards, but and openly personal.

"It was a plane crash," she said "and Eddie, so that you  
sorry, I'll tell you the truth I wasn't hurt not seriously."

not the story I'm going to give to the press and to all the others: you're never to mention it."

"Of course."

"I had no way to communicate with anyone but not because I was hurt. It's all I can tell you, Eddie. Don't ask me where I was or why it took me so long to return."

"I won't."

Now tell me what is the Railroad Unification Plan?"

It's—Oh, do you mind?—let Jim tell you. He will say enough. I just don't have the stomach—unless you want me to"—added with a conscientious effort at discipline.

No, you don't have to. Just tell me whether I understood the Unificator correctly: he wants you to cancel the Comet for two days in order to give her engines to a grapefruit special in Arizona?"

"That's right."

And he's cancelled a coal train in order to get cars to lug grapefruit?"

Yes.

Grapefruit?

"That's right."

"Why?"

"Dagny, 'why' is a word nobody uses any longer."

After a moment she asked, "Have you any guess about the reason?"

Guess? I don't have to guess. I know."

All right, what is it?"

The grapefruit special is for the Smather brothers. The Smather brothers bought a fruit ranch in Arizona a year ago from a man who went bankrupt under the Equalization of Opportunity Bill. He had owned the ranch for thirty years. The Smather brothers were in the punchboard business the year before. They bought the ranch by means of a loan from Washington under a project for the reclamation of distressed areas such as Arizona. The Smather brothers have friends in Washington."

Well?

"Dagny, everybody knows it. Everybody knows how train schedules have been run in the past three weeks and why some districts and some shippers get transportation while others don't. What we're not supposed to do is say that we know it. We're supposed to pretend to believe that public welfare is the only reason for any decision—and that the public welfare of the City of New York requires the immediate delivery of a large quantity of grapefruit." He paused, then added, "The Director of Unification is sole judge of the public welfare and has sole authority over the allocation of any motive power and rolling stock on any railroad anywhere in the United States."

There was a moment of silence. "I see," she said. In another moment she asked, "What has been done about the Winston run?"

"Oh, that was abandoned three weeks ago. They

trans. The equipment gave out."

"What has been done about rebuilding the old line around the incl?"

"That was shelved."

"Then are we running any transcontinental traffic?"

He gave her an odd glance. "Oh yes," he said bitterly.

"Through the detour of the Kansas Western?"

"No."

"Eddie, what has been happening here in the past month?"

He smiled as if his words were an ugly confession. "We've been sking money in the past month," he answered.

She saw the outer door open and James Taggart come in accompanied by Mr. Meigs. "Eddie, do you want to be present at the conference?" she asked. "Or would you rather miss this one?"

"No, I want to be present."

James' face looked like a crumpled piece of paper though its softened flesh had acquired no additional lines.

"Dagny, there's a lot of things to discuss, a lot of important

her office was like a historical reconstruction restored and maintained by Eddie Willers. Her map, her calendar, the picture of Nat Taggart were on the walls and no trace was left of the Clifton Looney.

"I understand . . . dependent of this

antly. You  
you're still

"No, I haven't quit."

"Now the most urgent thing to do is to tell that to the press, tell them that you're back on the job and where you were and—and by the way, where were you?"

"Eddie," she said, "will you make a note on this and send it to the press? My plane developed engine trouble while I was flying over the Rocky Mountains to the Taggart Tunnel. I lost my way, looking for an emergency landing and crashed in an uninhabited mountain section—of Wyoming. I was found by an old sheepherder and his wife who took me to their cabin deep in the wilderness, fifty miles away from the nearest settlement. I was badly injured and remained unconscious for most of two weeks. The old couple

was interview—"

"I'm not going to give any press interviews."

"What?"

been calling me all day! They're waiting

essential!" He had an air of panic "It's most crucially essential"

"Who's been calling you all day?"

"People in Washington and and others They're waiting for your statement."

She pointed at Eddie's notes "There's my statement"

But that's not enough! You must say that you haven't quit."

"That's obvious isn't it? I'm back"

"You must say something about it"

"Such as what?"

"Something personal"

"To whom?"

"To the country People were worried about you You must assure them"

"The story will reassure them if anyone was worried about me"

"I mean—" E

Jim was going to pieces she thought the jerky impatience the shrillness the aura of panic were now crude outbreaks of a toneless inefficiency

If

out in

did he

I

reassure the public about the state of our industry"

"Now you're—"

"The public had better be as unreassured as it has the wit to be Now proceed to business"

I—"

Proceed to business, Jim

He glanced at Mr Meigs Mr Meigs sat silently his legs crossed smoking a cigarette He wore a jacket which was not but looked like a military uniform The flesh of his neck bulged over the collar and the flesh of his body strained against the narrow waistcoat

pause but received no answer from either Mr Meigs is the representative of the Railroad Unification Plan You'll have many opportunities to cooperate with him"

"What is the Railroad Unification Plan?"

"It is a new national setup that went into effect three weeks ago which you will appreciate and approve of and find extremely practical She marveled at the futurity of his method he would make ch has saved

construction job during this period of emergency. It is—temporarily—impossible to lay new track. Therefore the country's top problem is to preserve the transportation industry as a whole, to reserve its existing plant and all of its existing facilities. The national revenue is turned over to the Railroad Pool Board in Washington as a whole and distributed, according to

the needs of the country's resources. All of the railroad's revenue is turned over to the Railroad Pool Board in Washington as a whole and distributed, according to

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Meigs glanced at him blankly "What's the matter with you?" asked

"Nothing" said Eddie wearily, "nothing"

"Mr Meigs" she said "if you look at a map, you will see the two thirds of the cost of maintaining a track for our transcontinental traffic is given to us free and is paid by our competitor"

Why sure" he said but his eyes narrowed, watching her suspiciously as if he were wondering what motive prompted her to so explicit a statement

While we're paid for owning miles of useless track which carry no traffic" she said

Meigs understood—and leaned back as if he had lost all further interest in the discussion

"That's not true!" snapped Taggart. "We're running a great number of local trains to serve the region of our former transcontinental line—through Iowa Nebraska and Colorado—and on the other side of the tunnel through California Nevada and Utah"

We're running two locals a day" said Eddie Willers in the dry blankly innocent tone of a business report "Fewer some places" which any given railroad

"How many trains have been discontinued in the country in the past three weeks?"

As a matter of fact" said Taggart eagerly "the plan has helped to harmonize the industry and to eliminate cutthroat competition"

"It has eliminated thirty per cent of the trains run in the country" said Eddie "The only competition left is in the applications to the Board for permission to cancel trains. The railroad to survive will be the one that manages to run no trains at all"

Has anybody calculated how long the Atlantic Southern is expected to be able to remain in business?"

Impassive

"It was only

a personal matter!

She remained silent. She sat looking at their faces. There was still an element of wonder in the numbed indifference of her mind. Jim had always managed to switch the weight of his failures upon the strongest plants around him and to survive by destroying them to pay for his errors as he had done with Dan Conway as he had done with the industries of Colorado but this did not have even the rationality of a looter—this pouncing upon the drained carcass of a weaker a half bankrupt competitor for a moment's delay was nothing but a cracking bone between the pouncer and the abyss.

The immediate of the thing

argued

and she

in an inconceivable manner of consciousness they knew all that she could tell them, it was useless to prove to them the irrational horror of their course and of its consequences, both Meigs and Taggart knew it—and the secret of their consciousness was the means by which they escaped the finality of their knowledge.

"I see," she said quietly.

"Well, what would you rather have had me do?" screamed Taggart. "Give up our transcontinental traffic? Go bankrupt? Turn the railroad into a miserable East Coast local?" Her two words seemed to have a hush—

say for any extra costs! Something had to be done! We had to have track!"

Meigs was looking at him with a glance of part astonishment, part disgust.

"I am not arguing, Jim," she said dryly.

"We couldn't permit a railroad like Taggart Transcontinental to fail! It would have been a national catastrophe! We had to think of all the cities and industries and shippers and passengers and employees and stockholders whose lives depend on us! It wasn't just for ourselves—it was for the public welfare! Everybody agrees that the Railroad Unification Plan is practical! The best informed—"

"Jim," she said, "if you have any further business to discuss with me—discuss it."

"You've never considered the social angle of anything," he said, in a dull—

himself—and who was now seeing that his course was narrowing and that he was in the ground between two straight walls.

"Mr. ——" he said, half-amused.

"It's perfectly useless to theorize about the future," snapped Taggart, "when we have to take care of the emergency of the moment in the long run—"

"In the long run, we'll all be dead," said Meigs. Then, abruptly, he shot to his feet. "I'll run along, Jim," he said. "I've got no time to waste on conversations." He added, "You talk to her about that matter of doing something to stop all those train wrecks—if she's the little girl who's such a wizard at railroading." It was said inoffensively, he was a man who would not know when he was giving offense or taking it.

"I'll see you later, Cuffy," said Taggart, as Meigs walked out with no parting glance at any of them.

Taggart looked at her, expectantly and fearfully as if



her comment yet desperately hoping to hear some word, any word  
"Well?" she asked

he cried, in a  
to discuss the  
most important one of all the—"

"Your growing number of train wrecks?"

"Not Not that"

"What, then?"

"It's that you're going to appear on Bertram Scudder's radio  
program tonight"

She leaned back "Am I?"

"Daggy it's imperative it's crucial, there's nothing to be done  
about it to refuse to get out of the question in times like these one has  
no choice and—"

She glanced at her watch "I'll give you three minutes to explain  
if you want to be heard at all And you'd better speak straight."

"All right" he said "I'll be brief"

on the bus

and Mr. T

to the national

haven't quite

"Why?"

"Because everybody thought you had" You don't know

no respect for authority people seem to be on the verge of panic

"Well?"

ical stuff being whispered about it but what they whisper is  
that no decent man will work for those people They mean the  
people in Washington

you were so famous for

plane crash Nobody thought

had broken the law if

a lot of popular

of well unrest, but

on the air and tell people that it isn't true that Directive 10-20  
destroying industry that it's a sound piece of legislation devised for  
everybody's good and that if they'll just be patient a little longer  
things will improve and prosperity will return They don't believe  
any public official any more You you're an industrialist one  
the few left of the old school and the only one

act after they thought you'd gone. You're known as . . . as a reactionary who's opposed to Washington policies. So the people will shun you. It would have a great influence on them, it would stress their confidence, it would help their morale. Now don't you see?"

He had rushed on, encouraged by the odd look of her face, a look of contemplation that was almost a faint half-smile.

She had listened, hearing, through his words, the sound of Rear-Admiral's voice saying to her on a spring evening over a year ago: "They

will.

"Now do you see?"

"Oh yes, Jim, I see!"

He could not interpret the sound of her voice, it was low, it was a moan, part-chuckle, part triumph—but it was the first sound of reason to come from her, and he plunged on, with no choice but hope. "I promised them in Washington that you'd speak! We can't let them—not in an issue of this kind! We can't afford to be suspected of disloyalty!"

"Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

"The office of the Morale Conditioner has—"

"The what?"

"The Morale Conditioner—that's Chuck Morrison—has called me three times to make sure that nothing would go wrong. They've issued orders to all the news broadcasters, who've been announcing all day all—"

"Under the circumstances. She said, 'You know what I think of the Washington policies and of Directive 10 289.'"

"At a time like this, we can't afford the luxury of thinking!"

She laughed aloud.

"But don't you see that you can't refuse them now?" he yelled. "If you don't appear after all those announcements it will support the rumors, it will amount to an open declaration of disloyalty!"

"The trap won't work, Jim."

"What trap?"

"The one you're always setting up."

"I don't know what you mean!"

"Yes, you do. You knew—all of you knew it—that I would refuse. You pushed me into a public trap, where my refusal would become an embarrassing scandal for you, more embarrassing than you thought I'd dare to cause. You were counting on me to save your faces and the necks you stuck out. I won't save them."

"But I promised all!"

"I didn't "

"But we can't refuse them! Don't you see that they've got 'em hogtied? That they're holding us by the throat? Don't you know what they can do to us through this Railroad Pool, or through the Unification Board, or through the moratorium on our bonds?"

"I knew that two years ago "

He was shaking, there was some formless, desperate, almost superstitious quality in his terror, out of proportion to the dangers he named. She felt suddenly certain that it came from something deeper than his fear of bureaucratic reprisal, that the reprisal was the only identification of it which he would permit himself to know, a reassuring identifi-

his true mo-

he wanted to

and Wesley "

sanction no

though the

their victim

motive and their hysterical insistence. With an awed contempt-awed by the enormity of the sight—she wondered what inner gradation those men had to reach in order to arrive at a level of approval of a who thought

"we have no choice!" he cried "Nobody has any choice!"

"Get out of here," she said, her voice very quiet and low

Some tonal quality in the sound of it . . . the note of

th-

kr-

more of the attacks of disgust which he was learning to endure as chronic condition.

After a moment, he asked "Dagny, what became of Quest Daniels? You were flying after him, weren't you?"

"Yes " she said. "He's gone "

"To the destroyer?"

The word hit her like a physical blow. It was the first touch of the outer world upon that radiant presence which she had kept within her all day as a secret of a . . . not to be

about,

she rea-

"Yes "

Then she clasped her hands over the edge of the desk, to steady her purpose and her posture, and said, with the bitter hint of a smile, "Well, Eddie, let's see what two impractical persons, like you and me, can do about preventing the train wrecks "

It was two hours later—when she was alone at her desk, bent over sheets of paper that bore nothing but figures yet were like a picture film unrolling to tell her the whole story of the railroad in the past four weeks—that the buzzer rang and her secretary's

she said, "Mrs. Rearden to see you, Miss Taggart."  
"Mr. Rearden?" she asked incredulously, unable to believe either.

as if she were swinging her hips  
"How do you do, Miss Taggart," she said in a lazily gracious voice,  
drawing room voice which seemed to strike, in that office, the  
style of incongruity as her suit and her bow  
Daggy inclined her head gravely  
Lillian glanced about the office, her glance had the same style of  
moment as her hat—an amusement purporting to express maturity  
the conviction that life could be nothing but ridiculous  
Please sit down," said Daggy

Lillian sat down  
What  
be  
she  
world, but self-evidently logical to the two of  
She stressed it by remaining silent  
What can I do for you?"  
I came to tell you," said Lillian pleasantly, "that you will appear  
Bertram Scudder's broadcast tonight."  
He detected no astonishment in Daggy's face—no shock, only the  
me of an engineer studying a motor that makes an irregular  
ad, "I assume," said Daggy, "that you are fully aware of the  
of your sentence."  
Oh yes!" said Lillian  
Then proceed to support it."  
beg your pardon?"  
proceed to tell me."

Lillian gave a brief little laugh, its forced brevity betraying that  
was not quite the attitude she had expected. "I am sure that no  
thy explanations will be necessary," she said. "You know why  
appearance on that broadcast is important to those in power  
ow why you have refused to appear. I know your convictions  
he subject. You may have attached no importance to it, but you  
now that my sympathy has always been on the side of the sys-  
now in power. Therefore, you will understand my interest in  
sue and my place in it. When your brother told me that you  
refused, I decided to take a hand in the matter—because, you  
I am one of the very few who know that you are not in a posi-  
to refuse."

am not one of those few, as yet," said Daggy  
Lillian smiled. "Well, yes, I must explain a little further:  
that your appearance will have the same value

those in power as—as the action of my husband when he signed Gift Certificate that turned Rearden Metal over to them. You know how frequently and how usefully they have been mentioning all of their propaganda.”

“I didn’t know that,” said Dagny sharply.

“Oh, of course you have been away for most of the last months so you might have missed the constant reminders—the press on the radio in public speeches—that even Hank Rearden approves of and supports Directive 10-289, since he has voluntarily signed his Metal over to the nation. Even Hank Rearden discourages a great many recalcitrants and helps to keep the line. She leaned back and asked in the tone of a casual aside, “I you ever asked him why he signed?”

Dagny did not answer. She did not seem to hear that it was a question. She sat still and her face was expressionless, but her eyes set too large and they were fixed on Lillian’s, as if she were now upon nothing but bearing Lillian to the end.

No. I didn’t think you knew it. I didn’t think that he would tell you,” said Lillian, her voice smoother, as if recognizing signposts and sliding comfortably down the anticipated course. “Yet you must learn the reason that made him sign—because the same reason that will make you appear on Bertram Scudder broadcast tonight.”

She paused, wishing to be urged. Dagny waited.

It is a reason,” said Lillian, “which should please you—as does my husband’s action is concerned. Consider what that sign meant to him. Rearden Metal was his greatest achievement, summation of the best in his life, the final symbol of his pride and my husband, as you have reason to know, is an extremely sensitive man, his pride in himself being, perhaps, his greatest possession. Rearden Metal was more than an achievement to him, it was a symbol of his ability to achieve, of his independence, of his strength of his rise. It was his property, his by right—and you know what rights mean to a man as strict as he and what property means to a man as possessive. He would have gladly died to defend it, rather than surrender it to the men he despised. This is what it meant to him—and this is what he gave up. You will be glad to know that he gave it up for your sake, Miss Taggart. For the sake of your reputation and your honor. He signed the Gift Certificate surrendering Rearden Metal—under the threat that the adultery he was carrying on with you would be exposed to the eyes of the world. Oh, yes, it is a sacrifice.”

How at the magnitude of the sacrifice a man has made for the privilege of using your body. You have undoubtedly taken pleasure in the nights which he spent in your bed. You may take pleasure in the knowledge of what those nights have cost him. And since—you like bluntness, don’t you, Miss Taggart?—your chosen status is that of a whore, I take my hat off to you.

and Daggy was still looking at her, but the intensity had  
1 from Daggy's eyes and posture. Lillian wondered why she  
1 Daggy's face were lit by a spotlight. She could detect no  
22 expression, it was simply a face in natural repose—and  
23 seemed to come from its structure, from the precision of  
24 planes, the firmness of the mouth, the steadiness of the  
25 he could not decipher the expression of the eyes, it seemed in-  
26 ous, it resembled the calm, not of a woman, but of a scholar,  
27 that peculiar, luminous quality which is the fearlessness of  
28 knowledge.

was I," said Lillian softly, "who informed the bureaucrats  
my husband's adultery?"

29 Daggy noticed the first flicker of feeling in Lillian's lifeless eyes.

30 toward that plea or to know what response Lillian had hoped  
31 and, she knew only that she had not found it, when she heard the  
32 less shrillness of Lillian's voice. "Have you understood me?"  
33 "Yes."

34 Then you know what I demand and why you'll obey me. You  
35 right you were invincible, you and he, didn't you?" The voice was  
36 imping smoothness, but it was jerking unevenly. "You have  
37 ray acted on no will but your own—a luxury I have not been  
38 able to afford. For once and in compensation, I will see you acting  
39 I want. You can't fight me. You can't buy your way out of it,  
40 sh the?"

41 3 pro  
42 10 bur  
43 am I  
44 "Yes."

45 "Then no further explanations are necessary, only the reminder  
46 but all the factual evidence—hotel registers, jewelry bills and stuff  
47 like that—is still in the possession of the right persons and will be  
48 broadcast on every radio program tomorrow, unless you appear on  
49 the radio program tonight. Is this clear?"

50 "Yes."  
51 "Now what is your answer?" She saw the luminous scholar-eye  
52 looking at her, and suddenly she felt as if too much of her were  
53 seen and as if she were not seen at all.

54 "I am glad that you have told me," said Daggy. "I will appear o  
55 letren Scudder's broadcast tonight."

There was a beam of white light beating down upon the glitter metal of a microphone—in the center of a glass cage imprison her with Bertram Scudder. The sparks of glitter were green blue, the microphone was made of Rearden Metal.

Above them, beyond a sheet of glass, she could distinguish booth with two rows of faces looking down at her—the lax and face of James Taggart, with Lillian Rearden beside him, her hand resting reassuringly on his arm—a man who had arrived by plane from Washington and had been introduced to her as Chuck McSon—and a group of young men from his staff, who talked at percentage curves of intellectual influence and acted like motor cops.

Bertram Scudder seemed to be afraid of her. He clung to the microphone, spitting words into its delicate mesh, into the ear

ing in overcolored detail her month of convalescence in the cabin of a sheepherder, then her heroic trudging down fifty miles of mountain trails for the sake of resuming her duties to the people in this grave hour of national emergency.

"And if any of you have been deceived by vicious rumors aimed to undermine your faith in the great social program of our leaders—you may trust the word of Miss Taggart, who—"

women who has often been critical of the government in the past and who may be said to represent the extreme, conservative viewpoint held by such giants of industry as Hank Rearden. Yet she—"

She wondered at how easy it felt, when one did not have to be; she seemed to be standing naked on public display, and a bare light was enough to support her, because there was no weight, pain in her—no hope, no regret, no concern, no future.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I will present to you the heroine of this night, our most uncommon guest, the—"

Pain came back to her in a sudden, piercing stab, like a splinter from the glass of a protective wall shattered by the knowledge that the next words would be hers. It came back for the brief length of a name in her mind, the name of the man she had called the destroyer—she did not want him to hear what she would now have to say. If you hear it—the pain was like a voice crying it to you—you won't believe the things I have said to you—no things which I have not said, but which you knew.

my every movement, you who're watching me now, wherever you are—you will hear it—but it has to be said

the last descendant of an illustrious name in our industrial world, the woman executive possible only in America the Operating President of a great railroad—Miss Dagny Taggart!"

She felt the touch of Rearden Metal, as her hand closed on the stem of the microphone, and it was suddenly easy, not with the ease of indifference, but with the bright, clear, living action.

She came here to tell you about the social program, the political and the moral philosophy under which you are now living. Her voice was so calm, so natural, so total a certainty in the sound of her voice that the mere sound seemed to carry an immense siveness.

You have heard it said that I believe that this system has degenerated as its system of economics, such as it is, about its political and the past.

Reactionary who opposed every step, measure, program and the present system. Now you hear him praised as our industrialist, whose judgment on the value of economic may safely be trusted. It is true. You may trust his judgment in the tower.

possible and to permit a country to survive. Consider now about his views. At such times as he was able to speak, we have heard him tell you that this government's policies were leading you to enslavement and destruction. Yet he did not denounce the final climax of these policies—Directive 10-289. You have heard him fight for his rights—his and yours—for his Directive 10-289.



my views also by the motive of that action, because his convictions are mine

body? I was Have I experienced the most violent form of self-pleasure? I have If this now makes me a disgraced woman in your eyes—let your estimate be your own concern I will stand on mine

Bertram Scudder was staring at her, this was not the speech he had expected and he felt, in dumb panic, that it was not proper to let it continue, but she was the special guest whom the Washington rulers had ordered him to treat cautiously, he could not be certain whether he was now supposed to interrupt her or not, besides, he enjoyed hearing this sort of story In the audience booth James Taggart and Lillian Rearden sat frozen, like animals paralyzed by the headlight of a train rushing down upon them they were the only ones present who knew the connection between the words they were hearing and the theme of the broadcast, it was too late for them to move they dared not assume the responsibility of a movement or of whatever was to follow In the control room a young intellectual of Chick Morrison's staff stood ready to cut the broadcast off the air in case of trouble, but he saw no political significance in the speech he was hearing no element he could construe as dangerous to his masters He was accustomed to hearing speech extorted by unknown pressure from unwilling victims, and he concluded that this was the case of a reactionary forced to confess scandal and that, therefore, the speech had, perhaps, some political value, besides he was curious to hear it

"I am proud that he had chosen me to give him pleasure and that it was he who had been my choice. It was not—as it is for most of you—an act of casual indulgence and mutual contempt It was the ultimate form of our admiration for each other, with full knowledge of the values by which we made our choice. We are those who do not disconnect the values of their minds from the actions of their bodies those who do not leave their values to empty dreams but bring them into existence, those who give material form to thoughts, and reality to values—those who make steel, railroad and happiness And to such among you who hate the thought of human joy, who wish to see men's life as chronic suffering a failure, who wish men to apologize for happiness—or for success or ability or life

"Miss Taggart said Bertram Scudder nervously aren't we  
departing from the subject of After all your personal rela

ing Well I thought that I knew everything about Hank Rearden  
but there was one thing which I did not learn until today It was  
the blackmail threat that our relationship would be made public  
that forced Hank Rearden to sign the Gift Certificate surrendering  
Hank Rearden Metal It was blackmail—blackmail by your government  
dictated by your rulers by your—"

In the instant when Scudder's hand swept out to knock the micro-  
phone over a faint click came from its throat as it crashed to the  
floor signifying that the intellectual cop had cut the broadcast off the

She laughed—but there was no one to see her and to hear the  
nature of her laughter The figures rushing into the glass enclosure  
were screaming at one another Chuck Morrison was yelling un-  
thinkable curses at Bertram Scudder—Bertram Scudder was shout-  
ing that he had been opposed to the whole idea but had been  
ordered to do it—James Taggart looked like an animal baring its  
teeth while he snarled at two of Morrison's youngest assistants  
and avoided the snarls of an older third The muscles of Lillian  
Rearden's face had an odd slackness like the limbs of an animal  
lying in the road intact but dead The morale conditions were  
making what they guessed they thought Mr Mouth would  
think "What am I to say to them? the program announcer  
was crying pointing at the microphone Mr Morrison there in  
silence waiting what am I to say?" Nobody answered him  
they were not fighting over what to do but over whom to blame  
Nobody said a word to Dagny or glanced in her direction No  
body stopped her when she walked out

She stepped into the first taxicab in sight giving the address of  
her apartment As the cab started she noticed that the dial of the  
radio on the driver's panel was lighted and silent crackling with  
a brief tense coughs of static it was tuned to Bertram Scudder's  
program

She lay back against the seat feeling nothing but the desolation  
the knowledge that the sweep of her action had perhaps  
wiped away the man who might never wish to see her again She  
thought for the first time the immensity of the hopelessness of finding  
him—if he did not choose to be found—in the streets of the city or  
in the towns of a continent in the canyons of the Rocky Mountains  
where the goal was closed by a screen of rays But one thing  
remained to her like a log floating on a void the log to which  
she had clung through the broadcast—and she knew that this was  
the thing she could not abandon even were she to lose all the rest  
It was the sound of his voice saying to her "Nobody stays here  
taking reality in any manner whatever"

"Ladies and gentlemen" the voice of Bertram Scudder's  
microphone crackled suddenly out of the static due to the

When she stepped  
change to her appearance. She felt  
face. She felt cease  
austerely for appearances  
were worn out by a hopeless, losing struggle. As she handed him  
tip, he said quietly with too earnest, too solemn an emphasis for  
a mere acknowledgment of the coins, "Thank you, ma'am."

She turned swiftly and hurried into the building, not to let him  
see the emotion which was suddenly more than she could bear.

Her head was drooping, as she unlocked the door of her apartment, and the light struck her from below, from the carpet  
before she jerked her head up in astonishment at finding the apartment  
lighted. She took a step forward—and saw Hank Rearden  
standing across the room.

She was held still by two shocks: one was the sight of his  
presence, she had not expected him to be back so soon, the other  
was the sight of his face. His face had so firm, so confident, so  
mature a look of calm, in the faint half smile, in the clarity of  
the eyes, that she felt as if he had aged decades within one month,  
but aged in the proper sense of human growth, aged in vision, in  
stature, in power. She felt that he who had lived through a month  
of agony, he whom she had hurt so deeply and was about to hurt  
more deeply still, he would now be the one to give her support and  
consolation, his would be the strength to protect them both. She  
stood—

as if  
nothing  
table!

to him as a question and he answered by the faintest nod, more  
more than a lowering of his eyelids, he had heard her broadcast.

They moved toward each other in the same moment. He seized  
her shoulders to support her, her face was raised to his, but he did  
not touch her lips, he took her hand and kissed her wrist, he  
fingers her palm as the sole form of the greeting which so much  
of his suffering had gone to await. And suddenly, broken by the  
whole of this day and of that month, she was sobbing in his arms,  
slumped against him, sobbing as she had never done in her life  
as a woman, in surrender to pain and in a last, futile protest  
against it.

Holding her so that she stood and moved only by means of his  
body, not hers, he led her to the couch and tried to make her sit  
down beside him, but she slipped to the floor, to sit at his feet  
and bury her face in his knees and sob without defense or disguise.

He did not lift her, he let her cry, with his arm tight about her.  
She felt his hand on her head, on her shoulder, she felt the protection  
of his firmness, a firmness which seemed to tell her that  
as her tears were for both of them, so was his knowledge, that  
her pain and felt it and understood, yet was able to witness it.

ys been within him and at the root of their bond—this strength  
his which would protect her if ever hers were gone  
When she raised her head, he was smiling down at her  
“Hank . . .” she whispered guiltily, in desperate astonishment at  
r own break

“Quiet, darling.”

She let her face drop back on his knees, she lay still, fighting for  
it, fighting against the pressure of a wordless thought he had been

ought that she would

When she looked up at him again he ran his hand over her  
rehead, brushing the hair off her face

“It’s over, darling,” he said “The worst of it is over for both of  
”

“No, Hank, it isn’t.”

He smiled

He drew her to sit beside him, with her head on his shoulder  
Don’t say anything now,” he said “You know that we both  
nderstand all that has to be said, and we’ll speak of it but not until  
has ceased to hurt you quite so much.”

His hand moved down the line of her sleeve down a fold of

1 There’s no reason why we should add to it No matter what  
ave to face, there can be no suffering between the two of us No  
dded pain. Let that come from their world It won’t come from  
3 Don’t be afraid We won’t hurt each other Not now.”

She raised her head, shaking it with a bitter smile—there was a  
perate violence in her movement, but the smile was a sign of  
covery, of the determination to face the despair

“Hank, the kind of hell I let you go through in the last month—”  
her voice was trembling

“It’s nothing compared to the kind of hell I let you go through in  
he last hour.” His voice was steady

She got up, to pace the room to prove her strength—her steps  
ile words telling him that she was not to be spared any longer  
When she stopped and turned to face him, he rose, as if he  
stood her motive

“I know that I’ve made it worse for you,” she said, pointing  
he radio.

He shook his head "No"

"Hank there's something I have to tell you"

"So have I Will you let me speak first? You see, it's something I should have said to you long ago Will you let me speak and not answer me until I finish?"

She nodded

He took a moment to look at her as she stood before him, as if to hold the full sight of her figure, of this moment and of everything that had led them to it

I love you Dagny he said quietly, with the simplicity of an unclouded yet unsmiling happiness

She was about to speak but knew that she couldn't, even if he had permitted it she caught her unuttered words, the movement of her lips was her only answer, then she inclined her head in acceptance

I love you As the same value, as the same expression, with the same pride and the same meaning as I love my work, my metals and Metal, my hours at a desk, in a furnace in a laboratory, in an engine, as I love my ability to work, as I love the act of sight and knowledge as I love the action of my mind when it solves a chemical equation or grasps a sunrise as I love the things I've made and the things I've felt as my product, as my choice, as a shape of my world as my best mirror, as the wife I've never had, as the which makes all the rest of it possible as my power to live"

She did not drop her face but kept it level and open, to hear and accept, as he wanted her to and as he deserved

I loved you from the first day I saw you, on a flatcar on a siding of Milford Station I loved you when we rode in the cab of the first engine on the John Galt Line I loved you on the gallery of Ellis Wyatt's house I loved you on that next morning You knew it But it's I who must say it to you, as I'm saying it now—if I am to redeem all those days and to let them be fully what they were for both of us I loved you You knew it I didn't And because I didn't, I had to learn it when I sat at my desk and looked at the Galt Certificate for Rearden Metal

She closed her eyes But there was no suffering in his face, nothing but the immense and quiet happiness of clarity

"We are those who do not disconnect the values of their minds from the actions of their bodies" You said it in your broadcast that night But you knew it, then, on that morning in Ellis Wyatt's house You knew that all those insults I was throwing at you were the fullest confession of love a man could make You knew that the physical desire I was damning as our mutual shame, is neither physical nor an expression of one's body, but the expression of one's mind's deepest values whether one has the courage to know it or not That was why you laughed at me as you did, wasn't it?"

"Yes," she whispered

"You said I do not want your mind, your will, your being or your soul—so long as it's to me that you will come for that lowest one of your desires" You knew, when you said it that it was my mind my will my being and my soul that I was grasping at the means of that desire And I want to say it now, to let them

mean what it meant my mind, my will, my being and my soul,  
ign—yours, for as long as I shall live”

He was looking straight at her and she saw a brief sparkle in his  
eyes, which was not a smile, but almost as if he had heard the cry  
he had not uttered

“Let me finish, dearest I want you to know how fully I know what  
I’m saying I, who thought that I was fighting them, I had accepted  
the worst of our enemies’ creed—and that is what I’ve paid for  
it — — — — — I had accepted the

we existed. I rebelled against their creed of human impotence and  
took pride in my ability to think, to act, to work for the satisfac-  
tion of my desires But I did not know that this was virtue, I never  
identified it as a moral value, as the highest of moral values, to be  
defended above one’s life, because it’s that which makes life pos-  
sible And I accepted punishment for it, punishment for virtue at  
last solely by my ignorance

— — — — — their extortions I thought  
— — — — — those impotent mystics who  
rattle about their souls and are unable to build a roof over their  
heads I thought that the world was mine, and those jabbering in-  
competents were no threat to my strength. I could not understand  
why I kept losing every battle I did not know that the force un-  
leashed against me was my own While I was busy conquering mat-  
ter, I had surrendered to them the realm of the mind of thought,  
of principle, of law, of values, of morality I had accepted, un-  
wittingly and by default, the tenet that ideas were of no consequence  
to one’s existence, to one’s work, to reality, to this earth—as if  
ideas were not the province of reason, but of that mystic faith which  
I despised. This was all they wanted me to concede — — — — —

enoi  
sign  
able  
cart

means and let them prescribe my ends I, who had  
ability to achieve the satisfaction of my desires let them prescribe  
the code of values by which I judged my desires I, who shaped  
matter to serve my purpose, was left with a pile of steel and gold,  
but with my every purpose defeated, my every desire betrayed, my  
every attempt at happiness frustrated

“I had — — — — — the mystics preached and I ran my  
— — — — — I rebelled  
— — — — — steel—  
— — — — — again—  
— — — — — duty

plotted for my destruction I rebelled against undeserved financial injury—but I accepted a life of undeserved pain I rebelled against the doctrine that my productive ability was guilt—but I accepted, as guilt, my capacity for happiness I rebelled against the creed that virtue is some disembodied unknowable of the spirit—but I damned you, *you* my dearest one, for the desire of your body and mine. But if the body is evil, then so are those who provide the means of its survival so is material wealth and those who produce it—and if moral values are set in contradiction to our physical existence, then it's right that rewards should be unearned, that virtue should consist of the undone, that there should be no tie between achievement and profit that the inferior animals who're able to produce should serve those superior beings whose superiority in spirit consists of incompetence in the flesh

"If some man like Hugh Akston had told me, when I started, that by accepting the mystics theory of sex I was accepting the looters theory of economics, I would have laughed in his face. I would not laugh at him now. Now I see Rearden Steel being ruled by human scum—I see the achievement of my life serving me enriched the worst of my enemies—and as to the only two persons I ever loved, I've brought a deadly insult to one and public disgrace to the other. I slapped the face of the man who was my friend, my defender, my teacher, the man who set me free by helping me to learn what I've learned. I loved him, Dagny, he was the brother the son, the comrade I never had—but I knocked him out of my life because he would not help me to produce for the looters. I'll give anything now to have him back but I own nothing to offer in such repayment and I'll never see him again, because it's I who'll know that there is no way to deserve even the right to ask forgiveness

"But what I've done to you, my dearest, is still worse. Your speech and that you had to make it—that's what I've brought upon the only woman I loved, in payment for the only happiness I've known. Don't tell me that it was your choice from the first and that you accepted all consequences including tonight—it does not redeem the fact that it was I who had no better choice to offer you. And that the looters forced you to speak, that you spoke to avenge me and set me free—does not redeem the fact that it was I who made their tactics possible. It was not their own convictions of sin and dishonor that they could use to disgrace you—it was mine. They merely carried out the things I believed and said in Ellis Wyatt's house. It was I who kept our love hidden as a guilty secret—they merely treated it for what it was by my own appraisal. It was I who was willing to counterfeit reality for the sake of appearance in their eyes—they merely cashed in on the right I had given them.

"People think that a liar gains a victory over his victim. What I've learned is that a lie is an act of self abdication, because one surrenders one's reality to the person to whom one lies, making that person one's master, condemning oneself from then on to faking sort of reality that person's view requires to be faked. And if

one gains the immediate purpose of the lie—the price one pays is the destruction of that which the gain was intended to serve. The man who lies to the world, is the world's slave from then on. When I chose to hide my love for you, to disavow it in public and live it as a lie, I made it public property—and the public has claimed it in a fitting sort of manner. I had no way to avert it and no power to save you. When I gave in to the looters, when I signed their Joint Certificate, to protect you—I was still faking reality, there was nothing else left open to me—and Dagny, I'd rather have seen you both dead than to permit them to do what they threatened. But here are no white lies, there is only the blackness of destruction, and a white lie is the same as a black lie.

Yes, you said, and I was proud to hear you—but that was the pride we should have claimed two years ago.

"No, you did not make it worse for me, you set me free, you freed us both, you redeemed our past. I can't ask you to forgive me, we're far beyond such terms—and the only atonement I can offer you is the fact that I am happy. That I am happy my darling, that I suffer. I am happy that I have seen the truth—even if my power of sight is all that's left to me now. Were I to surrender to it and give up in futile regret that my own error has wrecked my life—that would be the act of final treason, the ultimate failure toward that truth I regret having failed. But if my love of truth left me my only possession, then the greater the loss behind me, the greater the pride I may take in the price I have paid for that truth. Then the wreckage will not become a funeral mound above me, but will serve as a height I have climbed to attain a wider field of vision. My pride and my power of vision were all that I needed when I started—and whatever I achieved was achieved by means of them. Both are greater now. Now I have the knowledge of the superlative value I had missed of my right to be proud of my vision. The rest is mine to reach.

"And, Dagny, the one thing I wanted, as the first step of my life was to say that I love you—as I'm saying it now. I love you, dearest, with that blindest passion of my body which comes from the clearest perception of my mind—and my love for you is my only attainment of my past that will be left to me unchanged, through all the years ahead. I wanted to say it to you while I still had the right to say it. And because I had not said it at our beginning, this is the way I have to say it—at the end. Now I'll tell you what it was that you wanted to tell me—because, you see, I want it and I accept somewhere within the past month you have found the man you love, and if love means one's final, irreplaceable love, then he is the only man you've ever loved."

"Yes!" Her voice was half gasp, half-scream as under a pressure, the shock as her only awareness. "Hank!—how . . ."



He smiled and pointed at the radio "My darling, you used ~~the~~ but the past tense"

\*Oh ! Her voice was now half gasp, half moan and she closed her eyes

"You never pronounced the one word you would have rightfully thrown at them were it otherwise. You said, 'I wanted him,' not, 'I love him.' You told me on the phone today that you could have returned sooner -  
as you did. Only -"

She was leaning  
yet she was looking  
her lips but softened her eyes to a glance of admiration  
mouth to a shape of pain.

It's true I've met the man I love and will always love I've seen him, I've spoken to him—but he's a man whom I can't have who I may never have and perhaps, may never see again."

"I think I've always known that you would find him. I knew when you felt for me, I knew how much it was, but I knew that I was your final choice. What you'll give him is not taken away from me, it's what I've never had. I can't rebel against it. What I've had means too much to me—and that I've had it, can never be changed."

"Do you want me to say it, Hank? Will you understand it, if I say that I'll always love you?"

"I think I've understood it before you did"

"I've always seen you as you are now. That greatness of you which you are just beginning to allow yourself to know—I've always known it and I've watched your struggle to discover it. Don't speak of atonement; you have not hurt me, your mistakes came from your magnificent integrity under the torture of an impossible code—your fight against it did not bring me suffering, it brought me the feeling I've found too seldom: admiration. If you will accept it, it will always be yours. What you meant to me can never be changed. But the man I met—he is the love I had wanted to reach long before I knew that he existed and I think he will remain beyond my reach, but that I love him will be enough to keep me living."

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "Then you know what I feel," he said, "and why I am still happy."

Looking up at his face, she realized that for the first time he was what she had always thought him intended to be—a man with immense capacity for the enjoyment of existence. The taut look of endurance of fiercely unadmitted pain, was gone, now, in the midst of the wreckage and of his hardest hour, his face had the serenity of pure strength. It had the look she had seen in the faces of the men in the valley.

"Hank," she whispered, "I don't think I can explain it, but I feel that I have committed no treason, either to you or to him."

"You haven't?"

Her eyes seemed abnormally alive in a face drained of color if her consciousness remained untouched in a body broken by action. He made her sit down and slipped his arm along

back of the couch, not touching her, yet holding her in a protective  
brace

Now tell me," he asked, "where were you?"

I can't tell you that I've given my word never to reveal any-  
ing about it I can say only that it's a place I found by accident,  
and I crashed, and I left it bloodfolded—and I wouldn't be able  
find it again "

Couldn't you trace your way back to it?"

I won't try "

And the man?"

I won't look for him "

He remained there?"

I don't know "

Why did you leave him?"

I can't tell you."

Who is he?"

Her chuckle of desperate amusement was involuntary "Who is  
a Galt?"

He glanced at her, astonished—but realized that she was not  
ing "So there is a John Galt?" he asked slowly

Yes "

That slang phrase refers to him?"

Yes "

And it has some special meaning?"

Oh yes! There's one thing I can tell you about him he  
I discovered it earlier, without promise of secrecy he is the  
who invented the motor we found "

Oh! He smiled as if he should have known it Then he said  
ly with a glance that was almost compassion, "He's the de-  
stroyer isn't he?" He saw her look of shock and added, "No, don't  
wonder me, if you can't I think I know where you were It was  
entirely Daniels that you wanted to save from the destroyer, and  
I were following Daniels when you crashed, weren't you?"

Yes "

'Good God Dagny!—does such a place really exist? Are they all  
as? Is there ? I'm sorry Don't answer "

She smiled "It does exist "

He remained silent for a long time.

"Hank, could you give up Rearden Steel?"

"No!" The . . . he added with the

is . . .

The . . . words,

he . . . " he

d . . . ider-

nding, of compassion, of an almost incredulous wonder What

I you've now undertaken to endure!" he said, his voice low

She nodded.

She slipped down to lie stretched, her face on his knees

He stroked her hair he said "We'll fight the looters as long as

don't know what future is possible to us, but we'll win

learn that it's hopeless Until we do, we'll fight for our world. We'll  
all that's left of it

She fell asleep lying there, her hand clasping his Her last aware-  
ness, before she surrendered the responsibility of consciousness &  
the sense of an enormous void the void of a city and of a contest  
where she would never be able to find the man whom she had a  
right to seek.

## Chapter IV ANTI LIFE

James Taggart reached into the pocket of his dinner jacket, pulled  
out the first wad of paper he found which was a hundred-dollar bill  
and dropped it into the beggar's hand

He noticed that the beggar pocketed the money in a manner  
indifferent as his own "Thanks bud," said the beggar contemptu-  
ously, and walked away

James Taggart remained still in the middle of the sidewalk  
as it was

own.  
The walls of the street around him had the stressed unnatural  
clarity of a summer twilight, while an orange haze filled the chan-  
nels of intersections and veiled the tiers of roofs, leaving him on  
shrinking remnant of ground The calendar in the sky seemed to  
stand insistently out of the haze yellow like a page of old parch-  
ment, saying August 5

No—he thought, in answers to things he had not named—it was  
not true, he felt fine that's why he wanted to do something tonight  
He could not admit to himself that his peculiar restlessness came  
from a desire to experience pleasure, he could not admit that the  
particular pleasure he wanted was that of celebration because he  
could not do—

craving for pleasure was a dangerous breach  
The day had started with a small luncheon in the hotel suite  
of a visiting Argentinian legislator, where a few people of various  
nationalities had talked at leisurely length about the climate of  
Argentina, its soil, its resources, the needs of its people, the value  
of a dynamic progressive attitude toward the future—and his  
as the briefest topic of conversation Argentinian

would be declared a People's State within two weeks  
It had been followed by a few cocktails at the home of Orren  
Boyle, with only one unobtrusive gentleman from Argentina sitting  
gladly in a corner, while two executives from Washington and a  
few friends of unspecified positions had talked about national re-  
sources, metallurgy, mineralogy, neighborly duties and the welfare  
of the globe—and had mentioned that a loan of four billion dollars  
would be granted within three weeks to the People's State of  
Argentina.

formed company The Interneighborly Amity and Development  
Corporation, of which Orren Boyle was president and a slender,  
graceful, overactive man from Chile was treasurer, a man whose  
name was Señor Mario Martinez, but whom Taggart was tempted,  
by some resemblance of spirit, to call Señor Cuffy Meigs. Here they  
had talked about golf, horse races, boat races, automobiles and  
women. It had not been necessary to mention, since they all knew it,  
that the Interneighborly Amity and Development Corporation had  
an exclusive contract to operate, on a twenty year "managerial  
lease," all the industrial properties of the People's States of the  
Southern Hemisphere.

the  
of  
Ch had  
become famous for the parties he had given in the past six months,  
ever since

progressive  
when Chi  
except the  
ties, such as Argentina; but he had adopted an enlightening atti-  
tude and had joined the new regime, placing himself in the service  
of his country. His home in New York occupied an entire floor  
of an exclusive residential hotel. He had a fat blank face and the  
eyes of a killer. Watching him at tonight's reception, Taggart had  
t of feeling he  
his pendulous  
sexual relish in  
his Persian rug,  
his lips about a

His wife, the Señora Gonzales, was a small attractive woman,  
not as beautiful as she assumed but enjoying the reputation of a

to seek and, perhaps, could no longer remember. The party bored him; there had been only half a dozen persons for whose sake he had put in an appearance, and it had not been necessary to speak to that half dozen merely to be seen and to exchange glances. Dinner had been about to be served, when he had heard what he had come to hear. Señor Gonzales had mentioned—smoke of his cigar weaving over the half-dozen men who had drifted toward his armchair—that by agreement with the future People's State of Argentina the properties of dAnconia Copper would be nationalized by the People's State of Chile, in less than a month, September 2.

It had all gone as Taggart had expected, the unexpected to come when on hear . . .  
to escape. He had . . .  
dinner as if some . . .  
achievement of this night. He had walked out into the sunset twilight of the strange . . .  
sued pursuit . . .  
tion of a few . . .  
of discovery . . .  
of tonight's achievement and what aspect of it now gave him a feverish sense of gratification.

He reminded himself that he would sell his dAnconia Copper stock which had never rallied fully after its crash of last year and he would purchase shares of the Interneighborly Amity and Development Corporation as agreed with his friends which would bring him a fortune. But the thought brought him nothing but boredom, this was not the thing he wanted to celebrate.

He tried to force himself to enjoy it. Money, he thought, had been his motive, money nothing worse. Wasn't that a normal motive? A valid one? Wasn't that what they all were after, the Wyatts, the Reardens, the dAnconias? He jerked his head to stop it. He felt as if his thoughts were slipping down a dangerous blind alley, the end of which he must never permit himself to see.

No—he thought bleakly, in reluctant admission—money meant nothing to him any longer. He had thrown dollars about by the hundreds—at that party he had given today—for unfinished drinks for uneaten delicacies for unprovoked tips and unexpected whines for a long distance phone call to Argentina because one of the guests had wanted to check the exact version of a smutty story he had started telling for the spur of any moment for the clammy stupor of knowing that it was easier to pay than to think.

"You've got nothing to worry about under that Railroad Unification Plan," Orren Boyle had giggled to him drunkenly. Under the Railroad Unification Plan, a local railroad had gone bankrupt in North Dakota, abandoning the region to the fate of a blighted area, the local banker had committed suicide first killing his wife and children—a freight train had been taken off the schedule in Tennessee, leaving a local factory without transportation at a day's notice, the factory owner's son had quit college and was now in jail, awaiting execution for a murder committed with a gang of raiders—a way

station had been closed in Kansas, and the station agent, who had wanted to be a scientist, had given up his studies and become a dishwasher—that he, James Taggart, might sit in a private barroom and pay for the alcohol pouring down Orren Boyle's throat, for the waiter who sponged Boyle's garments when he spilled his drink over his chest for the second time.

...unhappy, were he reduced to the state of the beggar here had been a time when he had felt some measure of guilt—no clearer a form than a touch of irritation—at the thought that he shared the sin of greed, which he spent his time denouncing. Now he was hit by the chill realization that, in fact, he had never seen a hypocrite in full truth, he had never cared for money. His left another hole gaping open before him, leading into another blind alley which he could not risk seeing.

"I just want to do something tonight!"—he cried soundlessly to someone at large, in protest and in demanding anger—in protest against whatever it was that kept forcing these thoughts into his mind—his anger at a universe where some malevolent power would not permit him to find enjoyment without the need to know what he wanted or why.

What do you want?—some enemy voice kept asking, and he walked faster, trying to escape it. It seemed to him that his brain was a maze where a blind alley opened at every turn, leading into a fog that hid an abyss. It seemed to him that he was running, while the small island of safety was shrinking and nothing but those alleys would soon be left. It was like the remnant of clarity in the street round him, with the haze rolling in to fill all exits. Why did it have to shrink?—he thought in panic. This was the way he had lived all his life—keeping his eyes stubbornly safely on the immediate pavement before him, carefully avoiding the sight of his road, of corners, of distances, of pinnacles. He had never intended going anywhere, he had wanted to be free of progression, free of the yoke of a straight line, he had never wanted his years to add up to any sum—what had summed them up?—why had he reached some chosen destination where one could no longer stand still or retreat? "Look where you're going, brother" snarled some voice, while an elbow pushed him back—and he realized that he had collided with some large, ill-smelling figure and that he had been running.

He slowed his steps and admitted into his mind a recognition of the streets he had chosen in his random escape. He had not wanted to know that he was going home to his wife. That, too, was a fog-bound alley, but there was no other left to him.

He knew—the moment he saw Cherry's silent, poised figure as he rose at his entrance into her room—that this was more than he had allowed himself to know and that he would find what he wanted. But danger, to him, was a signal to

his sight suspend his judgment and pursue an unaltered course to the unstated premise that the danger would remain unreal by the sovereign power of his wish not to see it—like a foghorn within him, blowing not to sound a warning but to summon the fog

I ch  
said  
answer he obtained

He felt irritation at her unastonished manner and her pale unrevealing face. He felt irritation at the smooth efficiency with which she gave instructions to the servants then at finding himself in the candlelight of the dining room facing her across a perfectly appointed table with two crystal cups of fruit in silver bowls of ice between them.

It was her poise that irritated him most. She was no longer an incongruous little freak dwarfed by the luxury of the residence which a famous artist had designed. She matched it. She sat at the table as if she were the kind of hostess that room had the right to demand. She wore a tailored housecoat of russet-colored brocade that blended with the bronze of her hair the severe simplicity of its lines serving as her only ornament. He would have preferred the jingling bracelets and rhinestone buckles of her past. Her eyes disturbed him. They had for months they were neither friendly nor hostile, but watchful and questioning.

"I closed a big deal today," he said, his tone part boastful part pleading. "A deal involving this whole continent and half a dozen governments."

He realized that the awe, the admiration, the eager curiosity he had expected belonged to the face of the little shopgirl who had ceased to exist. He saw none of it in the face of his wife even anger or hatred would have been preferable to her level attentive glance. The glance was worse than accusing, it was inquiring.

"What deal, Jim?"

"What do you mean, what deal? Why are you suspicious? Why do you have to start prying at once?"

"I'm sorry. I didn't know it was confidential. You don't have to answer me."

"It's not confidential. He wanted, but she remained silent. "Well! Aren't you going to say anything?"

"Why no. She said it simply as if to please him."

"So you're not interested at all?"

"But I thought you didn't want to discuss it."

"Oh, don't be so tricky!" he snapped. "It's a big business deal. That's what you admire, isn't it? Big business? Well, it's bigger than anything those boys ever dreamed of. They spend their lives grubbing for their fortunes penny by penny while I can do it like that!"—he snapped his fingers—"just like that. It's the biggest single stunt ever pulled."

"Stunt, Jim?"

"Deal."

"And you did it? Yourself?"

"You bet I did! That fat fool Orren Boyle couldn't have swung

"I know too much, and how to cut Chick Morrison in on it but keep Tinky Holloway out and how to get the right people to give a few parties for Wesley at the right time, and Say, Cheryl, there any champagne in this house?"

"Champagne?"

"Can't we do something special tonight? Can't we have a sort of celebration together?"

"We can have champagne, yes, Jim of course

She rang the bell and gave the orders in her odd lifeless, unnatural manner a manner of meticulous compliance with his wishes while volunteering none of her own.

"You don't seem to be very impressed," he said. But what would you know about business, anyway? You wouldn't be able to understand anything on so large a scale. Wait till September second. Wait till they hear about it."

"They? Who?"

He glanced at her, as if he had let a dangerous word slip out in voluntarily. "We've organized a setup where we—me, Orren and a few friends—are going to control every industrial property south of the border."

"Whose property?"

uniques of production, to help the underprivileged who've never had a chance to—" He broke off abruptly though she had merely at looking at him without shifting her glance "You know" he said suddenly "If you're so damn anxious to

"If you're so damn anxious to see me, you ought to be less indifferent to my feelings."

It's always the poor who lack  
be born to wealth in order to

"...I'm not," she said.

came from the slums" she said.

Now the finer feelings of altruism" she said

"I've never tried to hide that I came from the slums," she said in the simple impersonal tone of a factual correction. "And I haven't any sympathy for that welfare philosophy I've seen enough of them to know what makes the kind of poor who want something for nothing." He did not answer, and she added suddenly her voice astonished, but firm as if in final confirmation of a long-standing doubt, "Jim, you don't care about it either. You don't care about any of that welfare hogwash."

"Well, if money is all that you're interested in," he snapped, "I can tell you that that deal will bring me a fortune. That's what you're always admired, isn't it, wealth?"

"It depends."



"I think I'll end up as one of the richest men in the world" said he did not ask what her admiration depended upon. "Then nothing I won't be able to afford. Nothing. Just name it. I can give you anything you want. Go on, name it."

"I don't want anything, Jim."

But I'd like to give you a present! To celebrate the occasion? Anything you take it into your head to ask. Anything I can do it. I want to show you that I can do it. Any fancy you care to name.

"I haven't any fancies."

"Oh, come on! Want a yacht?"

"No."

Want me to buy you the whole neighborhood where you live in Buffalo?

"No."

Want the crown jewels of the People's State of England? That can be had, you know. That People's State has been hinting about on the black market for a long time. But there aren't any old-fashioned tycoons left who're able to afford it. I'm able to afford it—or will be after September second. Want it?"

"No."

"Then what do you want?"

"I don't want anything, Jim."

"But you've got to! You've got to want something, damn you!"

She looked at him faintly startled but otherwise indifferent.

"Oh, all right. I'm sorry," he said, he seemed astonished by his own outbreak. "I just wanted to please you," he added sullenly. "but I guess you can't understand it at all. You don't know how important it is. You don't know how big a man you are married to."

"I'm trying to find out," she said slowly.

Do you still think, as you used to, that Hank Rearden is a great man?"

"Yes, Jim, I do."

Well, I've got him beaten. I'm greater than any of them, greater than Rearden and greater than that other lover of my sister's who—" He stopped as if he had slid too far.

"Jim," she asked evenly, "what is going to happen on September second?"

He glanced up at her from under his forehead—a cold glance while his muscles creased into a semi-smile as if in cynical breach of some hallowed restraint. "They're going to nationalize the American Copper," he said.

He heard the long harsh roll of a motor as a plane went to somewhere in the darkness above the roof, then a thin tinkle as a piece of ice settled melting in the silver bowl of his fruit cup before she answered. She said, "He was your friend, wasn't he?"

"Oh, shut up!"

He remained silent, not looking at her. When his eyes came back to her face, she was still watching him and she spoke first, her voice oddly stern. "What your sister did in her radio broadcast—was great."

"Yes I know I know, you've been saying that for a month"

"You've never answered me"

"What is there to ans 7"

"Just as your friends in Washington have never answered her"  
e subject He did not  
uttered a word about  
did not explain they  
as if she had never

... people will forget it Some  
ople will But the rest of us know what she said and that your  
ends were afraid to fight her"

"That's not true! The proper action was taken and the incident m  
oned and I don't see why you keep bringing it up"

"What action?"

"Bertram Scudder was taken off the air, as a program not in the  
blic interest"

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"And it's much better for national policy to let it be Scudder. The way, it's not necessary to argue about what she said—and if anybody brings it up we start howling that it was said on Scudder's program and that Scudder's programs have been discredited and that Scudder is a proven fraud and liar, etc., etc.—and do you think the public will be able to unscramble it? Nobody's ever trusted

You see, he belonged to the Tinky Holloway faction. It was pretty much of a seesaw for a while, between the Tinky Holloway faction and the Chuck

"Oh  
the ta  
world  
glass  
the tabulation.

"I'm trying to find out," she whispered. Her shoulders were sagging and her face looked

the world!

He was shocked to see that she smiled—a smile of so fiercely bitter a contempt that it seemed incredible on her gently patient face, she was not looking at him, but at some image of her own. "That's what my father used to say when he got drunk at the corner

1  
2 "No I had nothing to do with it. It's the date of some special

subject. "Well have been married a year. My it doesn't seem that

"It seems much longer," she said tonelessly.

She was looking off again, and he felt in sudden uneasiness that the subject was not safe at all. He wished she would not look as if he were seeing the whole course of that year and of their marriage.

not to get scared, but to learn—she thought—the thing to do is not to get scared but to learn. The words came from a sentence she had repeated to herself so often that it felt like a pillar polished smooth by the helpless weight of her body, the pillar that had supported her through the past year. She tried to repeat it, but she felt as if her hands were slipping on the polish, as if the sentence would not stave off terror any longer—because she was beginning to understand.

"If you don't know the thing to do is not to get scared but to learn."

It was in the bewildered loneliness of the first weeks of her marriage that she said it to herself for the first time. She could not understand Jim's behavior or his sullen anger which looked like weakness or his evasive, incomprehensible answers to her questions which sounded like cowardice. Such traits were not possible in the James Taggart whom she had married. She told herself that she could not condemn without understanding that she knew nothing about his world, that the extent of her ignorance was the extent to which she misinterpreted his actions. She took the blame, she took the beating of self-reproach—against some bleakly stubborn certainty which told her that something was wrong and that the thing she felt was fear.

"I must learn everything that Mrs. James Taggart is expected to know and to be," was the way she explained her purpose to a teacher of etiquette. She set out to learn with the devotion, the discipline, the drive of a military cadet or a religious novice. It was the only way she thought of earning the height which her husband had granted her on trust of living up to his vision of her which it was now her duty to achieve. And not wishing to confess it to herself, she felt also that at the end of the long task she would recapture her vision of him, that knowledge would bring back to her the man she had seen on the night of his railroad's triumph.

She could tell him when she told him about  
he  
the  
any  
eye that the  
Why? What  
if the fact

of his contempt were sufficient and required no reasons. She could not suspect him of malice; he was too patiently generous about her mistakes. He seemed eager to display her in the best drawing rooms of the city and he never uttered a word of reproach for her ignorance or her awkwardness for those moments when a silent exchange of glances among the guests

a burst of blood to her cheekbones told her that she had said wrong thing again. He showed no embarrassment, he merely watched her with a faint smile. When they came home, after one of those evenings his mood seemed affectionately cheerful. He was trying to make it easier for her, she thought—and gratitude drove her to study the harder.

She expected her reward on the evening when, by some perceptible transition she found herself enjoying a party for the first time. She felt free to act, not by rules, but at her own pleasure with sudden confidence that the rules had fused into a new habit—she knew that she was attracting attention, but now, for the first time, it was not the attention of ridicule, but of admiration. She was sought after, on her own merit, she was Mrs. Taggart. She had ceased being an object of charity weighing Jim down punfully tolerated for his sake—she was laughing gaily and seeing the smiles of response, of appreciation on the faces around her and she kept glancing at him across the room, radiantly, like a child handing him a report card with a perfect score begging him to be proud of her. Jim sat alone in a corner, watching her with undecipherable glance.

He would not speak to her on their way home. "I don't know," he snapped suddenly. "I keep dragging myself to those parties," he snapped suddenly, tearing off his dress tie in the middle of their living room. "I never sat through such a vulgar, boring waste of time!" "Why, Jim?" she said, stunned, "I thought it was wonderful!" "You would! You seemed to be quite at home—quite as if it were Coney Island. I wish you'd learn to keep your place and not to embarrass me in public." "I embarrassed you? Tonight?" "You did!" "How?" "If you don't understand it, I can't explain," he said in the tone of a mystic who implies that a lack of understanding is the confession of shameful inferiority. "I don't understand it," she said firmly. "I walked out of the room, slamming the door."

She felt that the inexplicable was not a mere blank, this time it had a tinge of evil. From that night on, a small, hard point of fear remained within her like the spot of a distant headlight advancing upon her down an invisible track.

Knowledge did not seem to bring her a clearer vision of Jim's world, but to make the mystery greater. She could not believe that she was supposed to feel respect for the dreary senselessness of the art shows which his friends attended, of the novels they read, of the political magazines they discussed—the art shows, where she saw the kind of drawings she had seen chalked on any pavement in her childhood's slums—the novels, that purported to prove the utility of science, industry, civilization and love, using language that her father would not have used in his drunkenest moments—the magazines, that propounded cowardly generalities, less clear and more stale than the sermons for which she had condemned the preacher of the slum mission as a mealy mouthed old fraud. She could not believe that these things were the culture she had so reverently looked up to and so eagerly waited to discover.

if she had climbed a mountain toward a jagged

it looked like a castle and had found it to be the crumbling ruin  
a gutted warehouse

"Jim" she said once after an evening spent among the men who  
re called the intellectual leaders of the country "Dr Simon  
Pritchett is a phony—a mean, scared old phony" "Now really  
answered "do you think you're qualified to pass judgment on  
philosophers?" "I'm qualified to pass judgment on con men I've  
met enough of them to know one when I see him" "Now this

them." Instead of the anger she expected she saw a brief flash  
of amusement in the lift of his eyelids "That's what you think,"  
he answered

She felt an instant of terror at the first touch of a concept she had  
not known to be possible What if Jim was *not* taken in by them?  
He could understand the phoniness of Dr Pritchett she thought—  
it was a racket that gave him an undeserved income she could even  
dismiss the possibility by now that Jim might be a phony in his own  
business what she could not hold inside her mind was the concept  
of Jim as a phony in a racket from which he gained nothing an  
unpaid phony an unvenal phony the phoniness of a cardsharp or  
a con man seemed innocently wholesome by comparison She could  
not conceive of his motive she felt only that the headlight moving  
upon her had grown larger

She could not remember by what steps what accumulation of  
pain first as small scratches of uneasiness then as stabs of bewilder-  
ment, then as the chronic nagging pull of fear she had begun  
to doubt Jim's position on the railroad It was his sudden, angry  
"do you don't trust me?" snapped in answer to her first, innocent  
questions that made her realize that she did not—when the doubt  
had not yet formed in her mind and she had fully expected that  
his answers would reassure her She had learned in the slums  
of her childhood that honest people were never touchy about the  
matter of being trusted

"I don't care to talk shop" was his answer whenever she men-  
tioned the railroad. She tried to plead with him once "Jim you  
know what I think of your work and how much I admire you for  
it" "Oh, really? What is it you married a man on a railroad pres-  
ident?" "I never thought of separating the two" "Well it  
is not very flattering to me" She looked at him baffled she had  
thought it was "I'd like to believe" he said, "that you love me  
for myself and not for my railroad" "Oh God, Jim" she gasped,  
"You don't think that I—I?" "No" he said with a sadly generous  
smile "I don't think that you married me for my money or my  
position I have never doubted you" Realizing in stunned  
fashion and in tortured fairness that she might have given  
ground to misinterpret her feeling that she had forgotten

bitter disappointments he must have suffered at the hands of fortune hunting women, she could do nothing but shake her head and moan, "Oh, Jim, that's not what I meant!" He chuckled softly at a child, and slipped his arm around her "Do you love me?" he asked. "Yes," she whispered "Then you must have faith in me Love is faith, you know Don't you see that I need it? I don't trust anyone around me, I have nothing but enemies, I am very lonely Don't you know that I need you?"

The thing that made her pace her room—hours later, in torture restlessness—was that she wished desperately to believe him and did not believe a word of it, yet knew that it was true

It was true, but not in the manner he implied, not in any manner or meaning she could ever hope to grasp It was true that he needed her, but the nature of his need kept slipping past her ever

rouse him But she had seen him look at her as if he were waiting for some reviving shot and, at times, as if he were begging She had seen a flicker of life in his eyes whenever she granted him some sign of admiration—yet a burst of anger was his answer, whenever she named a reason for admiring him He seemed to want her to consider him great, but never dare ascribe any specific content to his greatness

She did not understand the night, in mid April, when he returned from a trip in Washington "Hi, kid!" he said loudly, dropping a sheaf of lilac into her arms "Happy days are here again! Just those flowers and the

He poured him light, too brash a his eyes, and his

ment. She began to wonder whether he was elated or crushed

"I know what it is that they're planning!" he said suddenly without transition, and she glanced up at him swiftly she knew the sound of one of his inner explosions "There's not a dozen people in the whole country who know it, but I do! The top boys are keeping it secret till they're ready to spring it on the nation Will it surprise a lot of people! Will it knock them flat! A lot of people! Hell, every single person in this country! It will affect every single person That's how important it is"

"Affect—how, Jim?"

"It will affect them! And they don't know what's coming but I do There they sit tonight"—he waved at the lighted windows of the city—"making plans, counting their money, hugging their children to their dreams, and they don't know, but I do, that all of it will be struck, stopped, changed!"

"Changed—for the worse or the better?"

"For the better, of course," he answered

evant, his voice seemed to lose its fire sound of duty. "It's a plan to

as if it were into

our economic decline, to hold things still, to achieve stability security."

What plan?"

I can't tell you. It's secret. Top secret. You have no idea how many people would like to know it. There's no industrialist who wouldn't give a dozen of his best furnaces for just one hint of war—which he's not going to get! Like Hank Rearden, for instance, whom you admire so much." He chuckled, looking off into the air.

Jun," she asked, the sound of fear in her voice telling him what sound of his chuckle had been like, "why do you hate Hank Rearden?"

"I don't hate him!" He whirled to her, and his face, incredibly, turned anxious, almost frightened. "I never said I hated him. Don't worry, he'll annoy me."

"He'll annoy me?"

"He'll annoy me."

"He'll annoy me."

"He'll annoy me."

He forced herself to smile. "Yes, Jun, of course," she answered, ignoring what instinct in what impossible kind of chaos had led her say it as if it were her part to reassure him.

He looked at her and saw on his face what almost a smile and almost of study. "I had to tell you about it tonight. I had to tell you. I told you to know what tremendous issues I deal with. You talk about my work, but you don't understand it at all, it's much wider than you imagine. You think that running a railroad is a matter of tracklaying and fancy metals and getting trains on time. But it's not. Any underling can do that. The real life of a railroad is in Washington. My job is politics. Politics means made on a national scale, affecting everything, controlling everybody. A few words on paper—a directive—changing the life of every person in every nook, cranny and penthouse of this country!"

"Yes, Jun," she said, wishing to believe that he was, perhaps, a man of stature in the mysterious realm of Washington.

"You'll see," he said, pacing the room. "You think they're powerful—those giants of industry who're so clever with motors and factories? They'll be stopped! They'll be stripped! They'll be brought down! They'll be—"

He noticed the way she was staring at him. "Not for ourselves," he snapped hastily. "It's for the people. It's the difference between business and politics—we have no other ends in view, no private motives, we're not after profit, we're not—"

"That's all right," she said, looking at him. "That's all right."

"That's all right," she said, looking at him. "That's all right."

"That's all right," she said, looking at him. "That's all right."

"That's all right," she said, looking at him. "That's all right."



ing or begging for forgiveness, she did not know whether this triumph or terror. Jim don't you feel well? Maybe you've worked too hard and you're worn out and—'

'I've never felt better in my life!' he snapped, resuming his pacing. 'You bet I've worked hard. My work is bigger than any job you can hope to imagine. It's above anything that grubbing mechanics, like Rearden and my sister, are doing. Whatever they do, I can undo it. Let them build a track—I can come and break it just like that!' He snapped his fingers. 'Just like breaking a spine!'

'You want to break spines?' she whispered, trembling.

'I haven't said that!' he screamed. 'What's the matter with you? I haven't said it!'

'I'm sorry, Jim!' she gasped, shocked by her own words and the terror in his eyes. 'It's just that I don't understand, but I know I shouldn't bother you with questions when you're tired—she was struggling desperately to convince herself—you have so many things on your mind. . . such . . . such things . . . things I can't even begin to think of . . .'

His shoulders sagged, relaxing. He approached her and dropped wearily down on his knees, slipping his arms around her.

her duty to believe in him, that love was faith. Her doubt was growing—doubt of his incomprehensible work and of his relation to the railroad. She wondered why it kept growing in direct proportion to her self-admonitions that faith was the duty she owed him. Then, one sleepless night, she realized that her effort to fill that duty consisted of turning away whenever people discussed his job, of refusing to look at newspaper mentions of Taggart Transcontinental, of slamming her mind shut against any evidence and every contradiction. She stopped aghast, struck by the question. What is it then—faith versus truth? And realizing that part of her zeal to believe was her fear to know, she set out to face the truth with a clearer, calmer sense of righteousness than the effeminate dutiful self-fraud had ever given her.

It did not take her long to learn. The evasiveness of the Taggart executives, when she asked a few casual questions, the stale generalities of their answers, the strain of their manner at the mention of their boss, and their obvious reluctance to discuss him—told her nothing concrete, but gave her a feeling equivalent to knowing the worst. The railroad workers were more specific—the switchmen, the gatemen, the ticket sellers whom she drew into chat conversations in the Taggart Terminal and who did not know her in Taggart? That whining sniveling, speech-making deadbeat

may the President? Well, I'll tell you: he's the hobo on the  
"Y" train." "The boss? Mr. Taggart? You mean *Miss* Taggart,  
isn't you?"

plenty of his words, she dropped all attempts at casual prod-  
g, she told him what she thought of him.

so:  
we  
still  
he  
it  
ver  
it

few was not shock, but worse—the lack of shock, as if she had  
already known it. "Thank you, Mr. Willers," was all that she said  
as he finished.

He waited for Jim to come home, that evening, and the thing  
eroded any pain or indignation, was a feeling of her own  
achement, as if it did not matter to her any longer, as if some  
one were going to do it for her.

He went to his room, and he was  
at

at  
th

perhaps to come sooner or later.  
"Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

Why didn't you tell me she was there?" she asked.

For the flash of one instant, she grasped the unthinkable fact of a man who was guilty and knew it and was trying to escape by inducing an emotion of guilt in his victim. But she could not hold the fact inside her brain. She felt a stab of horror, the convulsion of a mind rejecting a sight that would destroy it—a stab like a swift recoil from the edge of insanity. By the time she dropped her head, closing her eyes, she knew only that she felt disgust, a maelstrom of disgust for a nameless reason.

When she raised her head, it seemed to her that she caught a glimpse of him watching her with the uncertain, retreating, calculating look of a man whose trick has not worked. But before she had time to believe it, his face was hidden again under the

those headlines . . . that glory . . . it was not you at all . . . it was Dagny "

"Shut up, you rotten little bitch!"

She looked at him blankly, without reaction. She looked as if she had uttered words that didn't mean

she had stood

from the first

He dropped down on the edge of a couch, in a posture of helplessness, dejection. "How could I have explained it to you?" he said in the tone of abandoning hope. "It's all so big and so complex. How could I have told you anything about a transcontinental railroad, unless you knew all the details and ramifications? How could I have explained to you my years of work, my . . . 'Oh, what's the use? I've always been misunderstood and I should have been accustomed to it by now, only I thought that you were different and that I had a chance' "

"Jim, why did you marry me?"

He chuckled sadly. "That's what everybody kept asking me. I didn't think you'd ever ask it. Why? Because I love you."

She wondered at how strange it was that this word—which was supposed to be the simplest in the human language, the word understood by all, the universal bond among men—conveyed to her no meaning whatever. She did not know what it was that it named in his mind.

"Nobody . . . love in the world? All I can't understand is for

you words aside

not offensively, but sadly "I thought you could You're all I have  
but maybe understanding is just not possible between human  
things"

"Why should it be impossible? Why don't you tell me what it is  
that you want?"

He sighed. "I . . . . . those  
why's Your cor . . . . . I'm

alking about can't be put into words. It can't be named. It has to be  
felt. Either you feel it or you don't. It's not a thing of the mind,  
out of the heart. Don't you ever feel? Just feel without asking all  
these . . . . .

What I believe in you. I trust you. What has all that money  
and fame and business and struggle given me? You're all I  
have

She stood without moving and the direction of her glance, low  
red to look down at him, was the only form of recognition she  
gave him. The things he said about his suffering were lies, she  
thought; but the suffering was real, he was a man torn by some  
unusual anguish, which he seemed unable to tell her, but which,  
perhaps she could learn to understand. She still owed him this  
much—she thought with the . . . . . pay  
ment . . . . . It be

It . . . . . had  
even . . . . . want  
to . . . . . hero

perhaps she was left with the gnawing drabness of pity. In place  
of the men she had struggled to find men who fought for their  
ideals and refused to suffer—she was left with a man whose suffer  
ing was his only claim to value and his only offer in exchange  
for her life. But it made no difference to her any longer. The  
man who was she, had looked with eagerness at the turn of  
every corner ahead, the passive stranger who had taken her  
place, was like all the overgroomed people around her the people  
who said that they were adult because they did not try to think or  
desire

But the stranger was still haunted by a ghost who was herself,  
and the ghost had . . . . . she had to learn to  
order . . . . .

What do you want of me?—was the question that kept beat  
her mind as a clue. What do you want of me?—she kept cry  
ing endlessly, at dinner tables, in drawing rooms, on sleepless nights

crying it to Jim and those who seemed to share his secret, to Belp Eubank, to Dr Simon Pritchett—what do you want of me? She did not ask it aloud she knew that they would not answer. What do you want of me?—she asked, feeling as if she were running, but no way were open to escape. What do you want of me?—she asked looking at the whole long torture of her marriage that had lasted the full span of one year.

"What do you want of me?" she asked aloud—and saw that she was sitting at the table in her dining room, looking at Jim, at his feverish face, and at a drying stain of water on the table.

She did not know between them, she she had not intended, he had never seemed to understand much simpler questions. She shook her head, struggling to recapture the reality of the present.

She was startled to see him looking at her with a touch of derision, as if he were mocking her estimate of his understanding.

"Love," he answered.

She felt herself sagging with hopelessness, in the face of the answer which was at once so simple and so meaningless.

"You don't love me," he said accusingly. She did not answer. "You don't love me or you wouldn't ask such a question."

"I did love you once," she said dully, "but it wasn't what you wanted. I loved you for your courage, your ambition, your ability. But it wasn't real, any of it."

His lower lip swelled a little in a faint, contemptuous thrust. "What a shabby idea of love!" he said.

"Jim, what is it that you want to be loved for?"

"What a cheap shopkeeper's attitude!"

She did not speak, she looked at him, her eyes stretched by a silent question.

"To be loved *for*!" he said, his voice grating with mockery and righteousness. "So you think that love is a matter of mathematics, of exchange, of weighing and measuring like a pound of butter on a grocery counter? I don't want to be loved *for* anything. I want to be loved *for* myself—not for anything I do or have or say or think. For myself—not for my body or mind or words or works or actions."

"But then what is yourself?"

"If you loved me, you wouldn't ask it." His voice had a shrill note of nervousness, as if he were swaying dangerously between caution and some blindly heedless impulse. "You wouldn't ask. You'd know. You'd *feel* it. Why do you always try to tag and label everything? Can't you rise above those petty materialistic definitions? Don't you ever feel—just *feel*?"

"Yes, Jim, I do," she said, her voice low. "But I am trying not to, because because what I feel is fear."

"Of me?" he asked hopefully.

"No, not exactly. Not fear of what you are."

Not me, but of

He dropped his eyelids with the swiftness of slamming a door—  
she caught a flash of his eyes and the flash, incredibly, was  
for "You're not capable of love, you cheap little gold-digger!"

... of all color but the desire to  
... many forms of it, other

You're a gold-digger of the

... You want marry me for my cash—but you married me for  
... ability or courage or whatever value it was that you set as the  
... ce of your love!"

"Do you want . . . love . . . to be . . . causeless?"

"... uses and reasons. Love

You have the mean,

... eeper who trades, but

... not me that

Her eyes were dark with the dangerous intensity of gummy  
goal "You want it to be unearned," she said, not in the tone  
of a question, but of a verdict.

"Oh, you don't understand!"

"Yes, Jim, I do. That's what you want—that's what all of you  
ally want—not money, not material benefits, not economic secur-  
y, not any of the handouts you keep demanding." She spoke in a  
al monotone, as if reciting her thoughts to herself, intent upon  
iving the solid identity of words to the torturous shreds of chaos  
wisting in her mind. "All of you welfare preachers—it's not un-  
earned money that you're after. You want handouts, but of a dif-  
erent kind. I'm a gold-digger of the spirit, you said, because I look  
or value. Then you, the welfare preachers . . . it's the spirit  
hat you want to loot. I never thought and nobody ever told us  
ow it could be thought of and what it would mean—the unearned  
... want unearned love. You  
... nest. You want  
... of being what  
... about . . . the

... necessity . . . of being."

"Shut up!" he screamed.

They looked at each other, both in terror, both feeling as if they  
were swaying on an edge which she could not and he would not

same, both knowing that one more step would be fatal.

"What do you think you're saying?" he asked in a tone of petty  
anger, which sounded almost benevolent by bringing them back into  
the realm of the normal, into the near-wholesomeness of nothing  
worse than a family quarrel. "What sort of metaphysical subject  
are you trying to deal with?"

"I don't know . . ." she said wearily, dropping her head, as if  
some shape she had tried to capture had slipped once more out

her grasp. "I don't know . . . It doesn't seem possible . . ."

"You'd better not try to wade in way over your head  
he had to stop.

the butler entered, bringing the

ice bucket with the champagne ordered for celebration.

They remained silent letting the room be filled by the sound which centuries

bol of joyous att

of a pale gold l

weaving reflections of candles the whisper of bubbles in through two crystal stems almost demanding that everything sight rise, too in the same aspiration.

They remained silent till the butler had gone Taggart sat looking down at the bubbles holding the stem of his glass between his simply casual fingers Then his hand closed suddenly about the stem into an awkwardly convulsed fist and he raised it not as to lift a glass of champagne but as one would lift a butcher knife.

"To Francisco d Anconia!" he said

She put her glass down "No" she answered

"Drink it!" he screamed

No she answered her voice like a drop of lead

They held each other's glances for a moment the light playing the golden liquid not reaching their faces or eyes

Oh go to hell he cried leaping to his feet flinging his glass to the floor

then rose slowly

She walked to her room her steps unnaturally even she opened the door of a closet she reached for a suit and a pair of shoes she took off the housecoat moving with cautious precision as her life depended on not jarring anything about or within her she held onto a single thought that she had to get out of this house just get out of it for a while if only for the next hour—and then later she would be able to face all that had to be faced

\* \*

The lines were blurring on the paper before her and raising her head

in the distance said August 5

The month behind her had gone leaving nothing but the blot of dead time It had gone into the planless thankless work of race from emergency to emergency of delaying the collapse of a road—a month like a waste pile of disconnected days each averting the disaster of the moment It had not been a sum of achievements brought into existence but only a sum of zeros that which had not happened a sum of prevented catastrophes not a task in the service of life but only a race against death

There had been times when an unsummoned vision—a sight of the valley—had seemed to rise before her not as a sudden appearance but as a constant hidden presence that suddenly chose to assume an insistent reality She had faced it through moments of leaden stiffness in a contest between an unmoving decision

myself pain, a pain to be fought by acknowledgment, by

knew what it would be like when you made your choice And  
prone her head like an animal out of bed to face an  
it, even this  
oments when, walking  
mpse of chestnut-gold,  
strangers, and had felt

if the city had vanished, as if nothing but the violent stillness  
his her were delaying the moment when she would rush to him  
seize him, but that next moment had come as the sight of some  
smugless face—and she had stood not wishing to live through  
following step, not wishing to generate the energy of living  
she had tried to avoid such moments she had tried to forbid herself  
look, she had walked keeping her eyes on the pavements She  
d failed by some will of their own, her eyes had kept leaping  
every streak of gold

She had kept the blinds raised on the windows of her office, re-  
membering his promise, thinking only If you are watching me,  
forever you are There were no buildings close to the height  
her office, but she had looked at the distant towers wondering  
hich window was his observation post, wondering whether some  
vention of his own, some device of rays and lenses permitted  
m to observe her every movement from some skyscraper a block  
a mile away She had sat at her desk, at her uncurtained win-  
dow, thinking Just to know that you're seeing me even if I'm never  
to see you again

And remembering it, now, in the darkness of her room, she  
aped to her feet and snapped on the light

Then she dropped her head for an instant, smiling in mirthless  
amusement at herself She wondered whether her lighted windows,  
in the black immensity of the city were a flare of distress, calling  
it his help

of a girl with  
startled aston-  
pt for a formal

change of greetings on a few chance encounters in the halls of the  
Taggart Building, they had not seen each other since the wedding.

Cherry's face was composed and unsmiling "Would you permit  
me to speak to you"—she hesitated and ended on—"Miss Taggart"

"Of course," said Dagny gravely "Come in"

She sensed some desperate emergency in the unnatural cal-  
Cherry's manner, she became certain of it when she



the girl's face in the light of the living room "Sit down," she said but Cherryl remained standing

I came to pay a debt, said Cherryl her voice solemn with effort to permit herself no sound of emotion I want to apologize for the things I said to you at my wedding There's no reason you should forgive me but it's my place to tell you that I know I was insulting everything I admire and defending everything I despise I know that admitting it now doesn't make up for it, even coming here is only another presumption there's no reason why you should want to hear it so I can't even cancel the debt I can only ask for a favor—that you let me say the things I want to say to you

Dagny's shock of emotion incredulous warm and painful, was wordless equivalent of the sentence What a distance in travel in less than a year She answered the unsmiling earnestness of voice like a hand extended in support, knowing that a smile would make up for it, and I

Transcontinental R.R.

the courage that kept married Jim for his you see I married Jim I thought that he was a "he"—she hesitated then went on firmly, as if not to speak anything—he's some sort of vicious moocher though I don't understand of what kind or why When I spoke to you at my wedding I thought that I was defending greatness and attacking an enemy but it was in reverse it was in such horrible believable reverse! So I wanted to tell you that I know the truth not so much for your sake I had no right in presuming that you'd care but but for the sake of the things I loved."

Dagny said slowly Of course I forgive it  
"Thank you she whispered, and turned to go  
Sit down

She shook her head "That that was all Miss Taggart."

Dagny allowed herself the first touch of a smile no more than in the look of her eyes as she said Cherryl my name is Dagny

Cherryl's answer was no more than a faint, tremulous crease in her mouth as if together they had completed a single smile "I didn't know whether I should—

"We're sisters aren't we?

"No! Not through Jim! It was an involuntary cry

"No through our own choice Sit down Cherryl" The girl obeyed, struggling not to show the eagerness of her acceptance not to grasp for support, not to break, "You've had a terrible time haven't you?"

"Yes but that doesn't matter—that's my own problem and my own fault.

"I don't think it was your own fault"

Cherryl did not answer, then said suddenly desperately, "Look what I don't want is charity."

"Jim must have told you—and it's true—that I never engage in any."

"Yes he did. But what I mean is—"

"I know what you mean."

"B. . . . ."

"No it doesn't. But that you value all the things I value does."

"You mean if you want to talk to me, it's not alms? Not"

ig or

Cherryl did not move her head but she looked as if it were lifted as if some bracing current were relaxing her features into that look which combines pain and dignity.

"It's not alms, Cherryl. Don't be afraid to speak to me."

"It's strange. You're the first person I can talk to and feels so easy yet I was afraid to speak to you. I tried to ask your forgiveness long ago ever since I learned truth. I went as far as the door of your office but I stopped."

"I stood there in the hall and didn't have the courage to go in. I didn't intend to come here tonight. I went out only to think something over, and then suddenly I knew that I wanted to see you—that in the whole of the city this was the only place to me to go and the only thing still left for me to do."

"I'm glad you did."

"You know Miss Tag—Dagny," she said softly in wonder, "was not as I expected you to be at all. They Jim and friends they said you were hard and cold and unfeeling."

"But it's true, Cherryl. I am in the sense they mean—only have they ever told you in just what sense they mean it?"

"No. They never do. They only sneer at me when I ask them what they mean by anything about anything. What did they mean by you?"

"Whenever anyone accuses some person of being unfeeling he means that that person is just. He means that that person has no useless emotions and will not grant him a feeling which he does not deserve. He means that to feel is to go against reason against moral values against reality. He means . . . what's the matter?"

"I asked seeing the abnormal intensity of the girl's face."

"It's . . . it's something I've tried so hard to understand."

"Such a long time."

"Well observe that you never hear that accusation in defence of innocence but always in defence of guilt. You never hear it said of good person about those who fail to do him justice. But . . ."

ways hear it said by a rotter about those who treat him as a rotter those who don't feel any sympathy for the evil he's committed or the pain he suffers as a consequence Well it's true—that is what I do not feel But those who feel it feel nothing for any quality human greatness for any person or action that deserves admiring approval esteem These are the things I feel You'll find that it's one or the other Those who grant sympathy to guilt grant none to innocence Ask yourself which of the two are the *unfeeling* persons And then you'll see what motive is the opposite of charity

What? she whispered

Justice Cherry!

Cherry! shuddered suddenly and dropped her head "Oh God" she moaned "If you knew what hell Jim has been giving me because I believed just what you said!" She raised her face in the sweep of another shudder as if the things she had tried to commit had broken through the look in her eyes was terror "Dagny," she whispered "Dagny I'm afraid of them of Jim and all the others not afraid of something they'll do if it were that I could escape but afraid as if there's no way out afraid of what they are and and that they exist"

Dagny came forward swiftly to sit on the arm of her chair and seize her shoulder in a steadying grasp "Quiet kid," she said "You're wrong You must never feel afraid of people in that way You must never think that their existence is a reflection on yourself—that's what you're thinking"

"Yes Yes I feel that there's no chance for me to exist, if they do no chance no room no world I can cope with I don't want to feel it I keep pushing it back but it's coming closer and I know I have no place to run I can't explain what it feels like"

the terrible  
hole world  
explosion  
some bar-  
thing he  
with  
that  
that  
o"  
near of  
leaving

\* Open minds by making them believe that that's what they're seeing But you don't have to accept it You don't have to see through the eyes of others hold onto yours stand on your own judgment you know that what is *is*—say it aloud like the holiest of prayers and don't let anyone tell you otherwise

"But but nothing is any more Jim and his friends—they're not I don't know what I'm looking at when I'm among them, I don't know what I'm hearing when they speak it's not real any of it it's some ghastly sort of act that they're all going through and I don't know what they're after Dagny We've always been told that human beings have such a great power of know-

much greater than animals but I—I feel blinder than any

of Hank Rearden—oh God, what am I saying?"

"know what you're saying."

"mean, how am I to deal with people? I mean if nothing held for the length of one hour—we couldn't go on could we?"

"I know that things are solid—but people? Dagny! They're not and anything they're not beings, they're only switches just standing among them."

the greatest problem  
human suffering  
who suffer and

showing what killed them I'll help you to understand a big subject and a hard battle—but first above all don't be

be look on it

restful longing as if  
straining and failing  
she said softly "but

There's one change  
You see I had never

Then when it happened, I thought that life was much more wonderful than I had expected. And now to get used to the idea that life and people are much more horrible than anything I had imagined and that my

I  
self  
was

"By holding to just one rule—"

"Which?"

"To place nothing—nothing—above the verdict of my own mind."

"You've taken some terrible beatings—maybe worse than I—"

worse than any of us. What held you through it?"

"The knowledge that my life is the highest of values too high to

be up without a fight."

She saw a look of astonishment of incredulous recognition on Cheryl's face, as if the girl were struggling to recapture some sensation across a span of years. "Dagny"—her voice was a whisper—

that's what I felt when I was a child. That kind of feeling

seem to remember most about myself. I never

and I never lost it, it's there it's always been there but as I grew up I thought it was something that I must find

and any name for it but just now when you said it, it struck me that's what it was. Dagny to feel that way about

my life—is that good?"

"Cheryl listen to me carefully—that feeling—with . . ."

which it requires and implies—is the highest, noblest and only on earth

"The reason I ask is because I . . . I wouldn't have dared think that. Somehow, people always made me feel as if I thought it was a sin . . . as if that were the thing in me which resented and . . . and wanted to destroy."

"It's true. Some people do want to destroy it. And when you learn to understand their motive, you'll know the darkest, ugliest, only evil in the world."

Cherry's smile was . . . hold upon a few drops . . . first time in months . . . there's still a chance . . . attentive concern and . . . used to it—to you to . . . believe it . . . to believe that it's real . . . and that . . . matter. She rose to her feet as if trying to retain the moment's assurance.

Prompted by a sudden causeless certainty, Dagny said sharply: "Cherry! I don't want you to go home tonight."

"Oh no! I'm all right. I'm not afraid, that way. Not of going home."

"Didn't something happen . . . ?"

"No . . . not really . . . that I began to see this . . . I'm all right. I have to . . . and then I'll decide."

"Yes?"

"May I come back to talk to you again?"

"Of course."

"Thank you. I . . . I'm very grateful to you."

"Will you promise me that you'll come back?"

"I promise."

Dagny saw her walking off down the hall toward the elevator, saw the slump of her shoulders, then the effort that lifted them, as the slender figure that seemed to sway then marshaled all of its strength to remain erect. She looked like a plant with a broken stem still held together by a single fiber, struggling to heal its breach, which one more gust of wind would finish.

Through the open door of his study, James Taggart had seen . . .

He . . . . . if he . . . . . very . . . . .

He . . . across the room. He reached for a cigarette, but snapped it in half and flung it at a painting over the fireplace.

He noticed a vase of Venetian glass—a museum piece, centuries old with an intricate system of blue and gold arteries twisting . . .

rough its transparent body. He seized it and flung it at the wall, burst into a rain of glass as thin as a shattered light bulb. He had bought that vase for the satisfaction of thinking of all the connoisseurs who could not afford it. Now he experienced the satisfaction of a revenge upon the centuries which had prized it—the satisfaction of thinking that there were millions of desperate sinners any one of whom could have lived for a year on the price of that vase.

He kicked off his shoes, and fell back on the davenport, letting his stocking feet dangle in mid air.

The sound of the doorbell startled him. It seemed to match his mood. It was the kind of brusque demanding impatient snap of sound he would have produced if were now jabbing his finger

assure  
it, he  
since,

"Harden to see you sir"

"What? Oh Well! Have her come in"

He swung his feet down to the floor but made no other commotion, and waited with half a smile of alerted curiosity choosing it to rise until a moment after Lillian had entered the room.

She wore a wine-colored dinner gown, an imitation of an Empire evening suit with a miniature double breasted jacket gripping her waistline over the long sweep of the skirt, and a small hat hanging to one ear with a feather sweeping down to curl under her chin. She entered with a brusque unrhythmical motion the train of her dress and the feather of her hat swirling then flapping about her legs and throat like pennants signaling nervousness.

"Lillian my dear, am I to be flattered delighted or just plain overcast?"

"Oh, don't make a fuss about it! I had to see you and I had to be immediately that's all."

The impatient tone the peremptory movement with which she came down were a confession of weakness by the rules of their written language. One did not assume a demanding manner unless one were seeking a favor and had no value—no threat—to barter.

"Why didn't you stay at the Gonzales reception?" she asked her usual smile failing to hide the tone of irritation. "I dropped in on them after dinner just in catch hold of you—but they said you hadn't been feeling well and had gone home."

He crossed the room and picked up a cigarette for the pleasure of padding in his stocking feet past the formal elegance of her chrome. "I was bored," he answered.

"I can't stand them," she said with a little shudder. He glanced at her in astonishment. The words sounded involuntary and sincere. He couldn't stand Senor Gonzales and that whore he's got himself a wife. It's disgusting that they've become so fashionable they don't even go to their parties. I don't feel like going anywhere any more. I'm not the same style any more. Not the same spirit. I went into Ralph Eubank for months or Dr Pritchett, or any



"You've got to prevent it!" she said, in the belligerent tone of a disguised command. "You've got to stop it!"

"Really? What?"

"My divorce."

"Oh . . ." His features dropped into sudden earnestness.

"You know that he's going to divorce me, don't you?"

"I've heard some rumors about it."

"It's set for next month. And when I say set, that's just what I do. Oh, it's cost him plenty—but he's bought the judge, the clerk, the bailiffs, their backers, their backers' backers, a fewulators, half a dozen administrators—he's bought the whole proceeding, like a private thoroughfare, and there's no single road left for me to squeeze through to stop it!"

"I see."

"You know, of course, what made him start divorce proceedings?"

"I can guess."

"And I did it as a favor to you!" Her voice was growing anxiously. "I told you about your sister in order to let you get that Gift Certificate for your friends, which—"

"I swear I don't know who let it out!" he cried hastily. "Only a few at the top knew that you'd been our informer, and I'm sure nobody would dare mention—"

"Oh, I'm sure nobody did. He'd have the brains to guess it, wouldn't he?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Well, then you knew that you were taking a chance."

"I didn't think he'd go that far. I didn't think he'd ever divorce me. I didn't—"

He chuckled suddenly, with a glance of astonishing perceptiveness. "You didn't think that guilt is a rope that wears thin, did you, Lillian?"

She looked at him, startled, then answered stonily. "I don't think so."

"It does my dear—for men such as your husband."

"I don't want him to divorce me!" It was a sudden scream. "I don't want to let him go free! I won't permit it! I won't let the whole of my life be a total failure!" She stopped abruptly, as if she had hurried too much.

He was chuckling softly, nodding his head with a slow movement that had an air of intelligence, almost of dignity by signifying a complete understanding.

"I mean . . . after all, he's my husband," she said defensively.

"Yes, Lillian, yes, I know."

"Do you know what he's planning? He's going to get the decree and he's going to cut me off without a penny—no settlement no alimony, nothing! He's going to have the last word. Don't you see? If I get away with it, then . . . then the Gift Certificate was no glory for me at all!"

"Yes, my dear, I see."

"And besides . . . It's preposterous that I should have to think of it, but what am I going to live on? The little money I had . . ."



own is worth nothing nowadays. It's mainly stock in factories of father's time that have closed long ago. What am I going to do?"

But Lillian he said softly. I thought you had no concern for money or for any material rewards.

You don't understand! I'm not talking about money—I'm talking about poverty! Real stinking hall bedroom poverty! That's out of bounds for any civilized person! I—I too have to worry about food and rent?"

He was watching her with a faint smile for once his soft, aged face seemed tightened into a look of wisdom. He was discovering the pleasure of full perception—in a reality which he could permit himself to perceive.

Jim, you've got to help me! My lawyer is powerless. I've got the little I had on him and on his investigators' friends and fixers, but all they could do for me was find out that they can do nothing. My lawyer gave me his final report this afternoon. He told me bluntly that I haven't a chance. I don't seem to know anyone who can help against a setup of this kind. I had counted on Bertram Scudder but—well you know what happened to Bertram. And that too was because I had tried to help you. You pulled yourself out of that one. Jim,

now You've got your word in the friends' order that divorce decree to be refused. Just have it.

He shook his head slowly, almost compassionately like a professional at an overzealous amateur. "It can't be done," Lillian he said firmly. "I'd like to do it—for the same reasons as you, and I think you know it. But whatever power I have is not tact in this case."

She was looking at him, her eyes dark with an odd lifelessness when she spoke. The motion of her lips was twisted by so much a contempt that he did not dare identify it beyond knowing it.

ch  
set

"It can't be done," he said. "Nobody does favors nowadays unless there's something to gain in return. And the stakes are getting higher and higher. The gopher holes as you called them are so complex, twisted and intertwisted that everybody has something on everybody else and nobody dares move because he can't tell what crack which way or when. So he'll move only when he has to. The stakes are life or death—and that's practically the only kind of stakes we're playing for now. Well, what's your private life any of those boys? That you'd like to hold your husband—well in it for them one way or another? And my personal stock-in-trade—well, there's nothing I could offer them at the moment in exchange for trying to blast a whole court clique out of a highly profitable deal. Besides, right now the top boys wouldn't do it at any price. They have to be mighty careful of your husband—he's the

is safe from them right now—ever since that radio broadcast my sisters."

You asked me to force her to speak on that broadcast!"

I know, Lillian. We lost, both of us, that time. And we lose, both of us, now."

Yes," she said, with the same darkness of contempt in her eyes, both of us."

It was the contempt that pleased him. It was the strange, heedless, familiar pleasure of knowing that this woman saw him as he was, remained held by his presence, remained and leaped back in her air, as if declaring her bondage.

"You're a wonderful person, Jim," she said. It had the sound of affection. Yet it was a tribute, and she meant it as such, and his assurance came from the knowledge that they were in a realm where affection was value.

"You know," he said suddenly, "you're wrong about those butcher's assistants like Gonzales. They have their uses. Have you ever heard Francisco d'Anconia?"

"I can't stand him."

"Well, do you know the real purpose of that cocktail swilling session staged by Señor Gonzales tonight? It was to celebrate an agreement to nationalize d'Anconia Copper in about a month." She looked at him for a moment, the corners of her lips lifting wryly into a smile. "He was your friend, wasn't he?"

Her voice had a tone he had never earned before, the tone of an emotion which he had drawn from people only by fraud, but which now, for the first time, was granted with full awareness to the real, actual nature of his deed—a tone of admiration.

Suddenly, he knew that this was the goal of his restless hours, this was the pleasure he had despaired of finding, this was the celebration he had wanted.

"Let's have a drink, Lil," he said.

Pouring the liquor, he glanced at her across the room as she lay etched limply in her chair. "Let him get his divorce," he said. He won't have the last word. They will. The butcher's assistants, Señor Gonzales and Cuffy Meigs."

She did not answer. When he approached she took the glass from him with a sloppily indifferent sweep of her hand. She drank, not in a manner of a social gesture, but like a lonely drinker in a saloon for the physical sake of the liquor.

He sat down on the arm of the davenport, improperly close to her, and sipped his drink, watching her face. After a while, he asked, "What does he think of me?"

The question did not seem to astonish her. He thinks you're a fool," she answered. "He thinks life's too short to notice your existence."

"He'd notice it, if—"

"—if you bashed him over the head with a club? I'm not too sure I'd merely blame himself for not having moved out of the way in only chance."

She shifted her body sliding lower in the armchair stomped forward as if relaxation were ugliness — if she were granting him the kind of intimacy that required no poise and no respect

"That was the first thing I noticed about him" she said, "when I met him for the first time that he was not afraid. He looked as if he felt certain that there was nothing any of us could do to him—so certain that he didn't even know the issue or the nature of what he felt

How long since you saw him last?

"Three months. I haven't seen him since since the Gift Certificate

I saw him at an industrial meeting two weeks ago. He still looked that way—only more so. Now he looks as if he knows it," he added "You have failed Lillian."

She did not answer. She pushed her hat off with the back of her hand. It rolled down to the carpet, its feather curling like a question mark. "I remember the first time I saw his mills," she said "His mills! You can't imagine what he felt about them. You wouldn't know the kind of intellectual arrogance it takes to feel as if anything pertaining to him anything he touched were made sacred by the touch. His mills his Metal his money his bed his wife! She glanced up at him a small flicker piercing the lethargic emptiness of her eyes. He never noticed your existence. He did not mind. I'm still Mrs. Rearden—at least for another month."

Yes he said looking down at her with a sudden new interest

"Mrs. Rearden" she chuckled. "You wouldn't know what that meant to him. No feudal lord ever felt or demanded such reverence for the title of his wife—or held it as such a symbol of honor. His unbending untouchable inviolate stainless honor! She waved her hand in a vague motion indicating the length of her sprawling body. 'Caesar's wife' she chuckled. Do you remember what that was supposed to be? No, you wouldn't. She was supposed to be above reproach."

He was staring down at her with the heavy blind stare of an potent hatred—a hatred of which she was the sudden symbol and the object. He didn't like it when his Metal was thrown into common public use, for any chance passer by to make did he?

"No, he didn't."

His words were blurring a little as if weighted with drops of alcohol he had swallowed. Don't tell me that you helped us to get that Gift Certificate as a favor to me and that you gained nothing

I know why you did it."

You knew it at the time.

"Sure. That's why I like you, Lillian."

His eyes kept coming back to the low cut of her gown. It was not the smooth skin that attracted his glance, not the exposed rows of her breasts, but the fraud of the safety pin beyond the edge.

"I'd like to see him beaten," he said. "I'd like to hear him scream with pain just once."

"You won't, Jimmy."

"Why does he think he's better than the rest of us—he and that  
of mine?"

He chuckled.

She rose as if she had slapped him. He went to the bar and poured  
himself another drink, not offering to refill her glass.

He was speaking into space, staring past him. "He did notice my  
ance—even though I can't lay railroad tracks for him and  
bridges to the glory of his Metal. I can't build his mills—but  
I can destroy them. I can't produce his Metal—but I can take it  
from him. I can't bring men down to their knees in admira-  
—but I can bring them down to their knees."

"But up!" he screamed in terror, as if she were coming too

1 "

1 unfinished

"Set your mouth, as if he wanted to strike her

her fingers half-closed lumpily about the glass and she drank,  
slugging the liquor down her chin, her breast and her gown.

"Oh hell, Lillian, you're a mess!" he said and, not troubling to  
look for his handkerchief, he stretched out his hand to wipe the  
sweat from her forehead with the flat of his palm. His fingers slipped under the gown's  
lacing closing over her breast, his breath catching in a sudden  
start like a hiccup. His eyelids were drawing closed, but he  
caught a glimpse of her face leaning back unresistingly, her mouth  
open for her mouth, her arms  
with responded, but the re-

—face Her teeth were bared in  
—but she was staring past him, as if mocking some invisible  
before her smile lifeless, yet loud with malice, like the grin of a  
dead skull.

He jerked her closer, to stifle the sight and his own shudder. His  
fingers were going through the automatic motions of intemperance—and  
he complied, but in a manner that made him feel as if the beats of  
arteries under his touch were snickering giggles. They were both  
performing an expected routine, a routine invented by someone and  
performed upon them, performing it in mockery. In hatred, in de-  
spise, in parody on its inventors.

He felt a sightless, heedless fury, part horror, part pleasure—  
the horror of committing an act he would never dare confess to  
—the pleasure of committing it in blasphemous defiance of  
—to whom he would not dare confess it. He was himself—the  
conscious part of his rage seemed to be screaming to him—  
was, at last, himself.

They did not speak. They knew each other's motive. Only two  
words were pronounced between them. "Mrs. Rearden," he said.  
They did not look at each other when he pushed her into his  
room and onto his bed, falling against her body, as against a soft,  
fleshy object. Their faces had a look of secrecy, the look of  
guilt, the furtive, smutty look of children defiling someone's  
ice by chalking sneaky scratches intended as symbols of

Afterward, he did not disappoint him that what he had possessed was an inanimate body without resistance or response. It was as if a woman that he had wanted to possess. It was not an act in celebration of life that he had wanted to perform—but an act in celebration of the triumph of impotence.

\* \* \*

Cherry unlocked the door and slipped in quietly, almost reptitiously as if hoping not to be seen or to see the place which was her home. The sense of Dagny's presence—of Dagny's world—had supported her on her way back, but when she entered her own apartment the walls seemed to swallow her again into the suffocation of a trap.

The apartment was silent, a wedge of light cut across the anteroom from a door left half-open. She dragged herself mechanically in the direction of her room. Then she stopped.

The open band of light was the door of Jim's study, and on the illuminated strip of its carpet she saw a woman's hat with a feather stirring faintly in a draft.

She took a step forward. The room was empty, she saw no glasses, one on a table, the other on the floor, and a woman's purse lying on the seat of an armchair. She stood, in utter stupor, until she heard the muffled drawl of two voices behind the door of Jim's bedroom, she could not distinguish the words, only the quality of the sounds. Jim's voice had a tone of irritation, the woman's—of contempt.

Then she found herself in her own room, fumbling frantically to lock her door. She had been flung here by the blind panic of escape, as if it were she who had to hide, she who had to run from the ugliness of being seen in the act of seeing them—a panic made of revulsion of pity, of embarrassment, of that mental chastity which recoils from confronting a man with the unanswerable proof of his evil.

She stood in the middle of her room, unable to grasp what action was now possible to her. Then her knees gave way, folding again, she found herself sitting on the floor and she stayed there, staring at the carpet shaking.

It was neither anger nor jealousy nor indignation, but the blind horror of dealing with the grotesquely senseless. It was the knowledge that neither their marriage nor his love for her nor his assistance on holding her nor his love for that other woman nor the gratuitous adultery had any meaning whatever, that there was no shred of sense in any of it and no use to grope for explanations. She had always thought of evil as purposeful, as a means to some end, but what she was seeing now was evil for evil's sake.

She did not know how long she had sat there when she heard their steps and voices, then the sound of the front door closing. She got up, with no purpose in mind, but impelled by some instinct from the past, as if acting in a vacuum where honesty was no longer relevant any longer, but knowing no other way to act.

She met Jim in the anteroom. For a moment, they looked at each other as if neither could believe the other's reality.



you go and do the same, like all those bitches, and keep your mouth shut!"

He saw the sudden, startling sight of a look of hard, unclouded unfeeling, almost inhuman intelligence in her eyes "Jim, if I were the kind who did or would, you wouldn't have married me"

"No I wouldn't have"

"Why did you marry me?"

He felt himself drawn as by a whirlpool, part in relief that the moment of danger was past, part in irresistible defiance of the same danger "Because you were a cheap, helpless, preposterous creature at anything to expect of me" "I thought you'd know it"

"Without daring to ask what I am! Without reasons! Without putting me on the spot always to live up to reason after reason and reason, like being on some goddamn dress parade to the end of my days!"

"You loved me because I was worthless?"

"Well, what did you think you were?"

"You loved me for being rotten?"

"What else did you have to offer? But you didn't have the ability to appreciate it I wanted to be generous, I wanted to give you security—what security is there in being loved for one's virtues? The competition's wide open, like a jungle market place, a better person will always come along to beat you! But I—I was willing to love you for your flaws, for your faults and weaknesses, for your ignorance, your crudeness, your vulgarity—and that's safe, you have nothing to fear, nothing to hide—you could be yourself you're real, thinking, sinful, ugly self—everybody's self is a gutter—but you could hold my love, with nothing demanded of you!"

"You wanted me to accept your love as alms?"

"Did you imagine that you could earn it? Did you imagine that you could deserve to marry me, you poor little tramp? I used to be the likes of you for the price of a meal I wanted you to know with every step you took, with every mouthful of caviar you swallowed, that you owed it all to me, that you had nothing as were nothing and could never hope to equal, deserve or repay!"

"I tried . . . to deserve it"

"Of what use would you be to me, if you had?"

"You didn't want me to?"

"Oh, you goddamn fool!"

"You didn't want me to improve? You didn't want me to rise? You thought me rotten and you wanted me to stay rotten?"

"Of what use would you be to me, if you earned it all, and I had to work to hold you, and you could trade elsewhere if you chose?"

"You wanted it to be alms . . . for both of us"

"You wanted us to be two beggars chained to each other?"

"Yes, you goddamn evangelist! Yes, you goddamn"

"Yes!"

"You chose me because I was worthless?"

Yes?"

You're lying Jim."

His answer was only a startled glance of astonishment.

Those girls that you used to buy for the price of a meal, they  
did have been glad to let their real selves become a gutter, they  
did have taken your alms and never tried to rise but you would  
— — — — — because you knew that I  
— — — — — it, that I was struggling to  
you?"

L. HE LIVED

When the headlight she had felt rushing upon her, but its goal—and  
screamed in the bright explosion of the impact—she screamed  
physical terror, backing away from him.

"What's the matter with you?" he cried, shaking, not daring to  
in her eyes the thing she had seen.

She moved her hands in groping gestures, half waving it away,  
trying to grasp it, when she answered her words did not quite  
re it, but they were the only words she could find "You . .  
I'm a killer . . . for the sake of killing . . ."

I was too close to the unnamed, shaking with terror, he swung  
: blindly and struck her in the face.

She fell against the side of an armchair, her head striking the  
or but she raised her head in a moment and looked up at him  
nkly without astonishment, as if physical reality were merely  
ing the form she had expected. A single pear shaped drop of  
iod went slithering slowly from the corner of her mouth.

He stood motionless—and for a moment they looked at each  
her as if neither dared to move.

She moved first. She sprang to her feet—and ran. She ran out of  
e room out of the apartment—he heard her running down the  
ll, tearing open the iron door of the emergency stairway, not  
wing to ring for the elevator.

She ran down the stairs, opening doors on random landings,  
nning through the twisting hallways of the building then down  
e stairs again, until she found herself in the lobby and ran to  
e street.

After a while, she saw that she was walking down a littered  
dwalk in a dark neighborhood, with an electric bulb glaring in  
ie cave of a subway entrance and a lighted billboard advertising  
Ma crackers on the black roof of a laundry. She did not remem-  
tr how she had come here. Her mind seemed to work in broken  
urts, without connections. She knew only that she had to escape  
al that escape was impossible.

[She had to escape from Jim, she thought. Where?—she asked,  
oking around her with a glance like a cry of prayer. She would  
ave seized upon a job in a five and ten, or in that laundry, or in  
ty of the dismal shops she passed. But she would work, she  
ought, and the harder she worked, the more malevolence  
ould draw from the people around her, and she would not  
pen truth would be expected of her and when a lie, but



stricter her honesty the greater the fraud she would be able to suffer at their hands. She had seen it before and had borne it at the home of her family, in the shops of the slums, but she thought that these were vicious exceptions, chance evils to be met and forget. Now she knew that they were not exceptions, that it was the code accepted by the world, that it was a creed of life known by all but kept unnamed, leering at her from people's eyes in that sly, guilty look she had never been able to understand—and at the root of the creed, hidden by silence, lying in wait for her in the cellars of the city and in the cellars of their souls, there was a thing with which one could not live.

Why are you doing it to me?—she cried soundlessly in the darkness around her. Because you're good—some enormous laugh seemed to be answering from the roof tops and from the sewers. Then I won't want to be good any longer—But you will—I do have to—You will—I can't bear it—You will.

She shuddered and walked faster—but ahead of her, in the far distance, she saw the calendar above the roofs of the city—it was long past midnight and the calendar said August 6, but it seemed to her suddenly that she saw September 2 written above the date in letters of blood—and she thought: If she worked, if she struggled, if she rose, she would take a harder beating with each step of her climb until she had reached the top, and then she would have a company or an uncle Jim on some September day, and the parties where Jim

Then I won't!—she screamed and whirled around and was running back along the street—but it seemed to her that in the black sky grinning at her from the steam of the laundry, there was an enormous figure that would hold no shape, but its grin remained the same on its changing faces and its face was Jim's and her childhood preacher's and the woman social workers from the personnel department of the five and ten—and the grin seemed to say to her: People like you will always stay honest, people like you will always struggle to rise, people like you will always work, we're safe and you have no choice.

She ran. When she looked around her once more, she was walking down a quiet street, past the glass doorways where lights were burning in the carpeted lobbies of luxurious buildings. She noted that she was limping and saw that the heel of her pump was loose, she had broken it somewhere in her blank span of running.

From the sudden space of a broad intersection, she looked at the great skyscrapers in the distance. They were vanishing quickly into a veil of fog.

And they were tombstones, slender obelisks soaring in memory of the men who had been destroyed for having created them, they were the frozen shape of the silent cry that the reward of achievement was martyrdom.

Somewhere in one of those vanishing towers, she thought, there was Dagny—but Dagny was a lonely victim, fighting a losing battle, to be destroyed and to sink into fog like the others. There is no place to go, she thought and stumbled on—I can't and still nor move much longer—I can neither work nor rest—I neither surrender nor fight—but this . . . this ■ what they want of me, this is where they want me—neither living nor dead, neither thinking nor insane, but just a chunk of pulp that dreams with fear, to be shaped by them as they please, they who have no shape of their own.

She plunged into the darkness behind a corner, shrinking in dread from any human figure. No, she thought, they're not evil, not ■ people . . . they're only their own first victims, but they all where in Jim's creed, and I can't deal with them, once I know it . . . and if I spoke to them, they would try to grant me their good will, but I'd know what it is that they hold as the good and I would see death staring out of their eyes.

The sidewalk had shrunk to a broken strip, and splashes of garbage ran over from the cans ■ the stoops of crumbling houses. Beyond the dusty glow of a saloon, she saw a lighted sign "Young

men who ran  
" helping suf-  
-if she faced  
" they would

never, "I have no guilt, I am innocent, but I m—" Sorry We have a concern for the pain of the innocent"

She ran. She stopped, regaining her eyesight, on the corner of a long, wide street. The buildings and pavements merged with the sky—and

Then the lights switched to red, dropping heavily lower, turning from sharp circles into foggy smears, into a warning of unlimited danger. She stood and watched a giant truck go by, its enormous wheels crushing one more layer of shiny polish into the flattened ripples of the street.

The lights went back to the green of safety—but she stood trembling, unable to move. That's how it works for the travel of her body, she thought, but what have they done to the traffic of the soul? They have set the signals in reverse—and the road is safe when the lights are the red of evil—but when the lights are the green of virtue, promising that yours is the right-of-way, you venture forth and are ground by the wheels. All over the world, she thought—those inverted lights go reaching into every land, they go on, encircling the earth. And the earth is littered with mangled ripples, who don't know what has hit them or why, who crawl as best they can on their crushed limbs through their lightless day— with no answer save that pain is the core of existence—and

traffic cops of morality chortle and tell them that man, by nature is unable to walk

These were not words in her mind these were the words <sup>she</sup> would have named, had she had the power to find them what knew only as a sudden fury that made her beat her fists in the horror against the iron post of the traffic light beside her, against the hollow tube where the hoarse, rusty chuckle of a released mechanism went grating on and on

She could not smash it with her fists, she could not batter one of all the posts of the street stretching off beyond eyesight—she could not smash that creed from the souls of the men she would counter, one by one She could not deal with people any longer, could not take the paths they took—but what could she say to the she who had no words to name the thing she knew and no way that people would hear? What could she tell them? How could she reach them all? Where were the men who could have spoken

These were not words in her mind these were only the blow her fists against metal—then she saw herself suddenly, battering knuckles to blood against an immovable post and the sight made her shudder—and she stumbled away She went on, seeing nothing around her feeling trapped in a maze with no exit

No exit—her shreds of awareness were saying beating it into pavements in the sound of her steps—no exit no refuge no signals no way to tell destruction from safety, or even from friend Like that dog she had heard about, she thought

somebody's dog in somebody's laboratory the dog got his signals switched on him, and saw no way to tell satisfaction from torture saw food changed to beatings and beatings to food saw his eyes and ears deceiving him and his judgment futile and consciousness impotent in a shifting swimming shapeless world and gave up, refusing to eat at that price or to live in a world of that kind No!—was the only conscious word in her brain no!—no!—no!—not your way, not your world—even if this is all that's to be left of mine!

It was in the darkest hour of the night in an alley among tenements and warehouses that the social worker saw her The social worker was a woman whose gray face and gray coat blended with the shadows of the district She saw a young girl wearing a suit too smart and expensive for the neighborhood with no hat, no purse, with a bare heel disheveled hair and a bruise at the corner of her mouth, staggering blindly, not knowing sidewalks from pavements The street was only a narrow crack between the sheer, blank walls and storage structures but a ray of light fell through a fog dank with the odor of rotting water, a stone parapet ended the street on the edge of a vast black hole merging river and sky

The social worker approached her and asked severely "Are you in trouble?"—and saw one wary eye the other hidden by a mass of hair, and the face of a wild creature who has forgotten the sound of human voices, but listens as to a distant echo, with suspicion yet almost with hope

The social worker seized her arm "It's a dog"

State if you society girls had something to do here

steam of terror She tore her arm loose and sprang back then  
streamed in articulate sounds  
"Not No Not your kind of world!"  
Then she ran, ran by the sudden propulsion of a burst of power  
the power of a creature running for its life she ran straight down  
the street that ended in the river—and in a single streak of speed  
with no break, no moment of doubt with full consciousness of act  
in self-preservation, she kept running till the parapet barred  
her way and, not stopping went over into space

## Chapter V THEIR BROTHERS' KEEPERS

In the morning of September 2, a copper wire broke in California,  
between two telephone poles by the track of the Pacific branch  
line of Taggart Transcontinental

A slow thin rain had been falling since midnight and there had  
been no sunrise only a gray light seeping through a soggy sky—  
and the brilliant raindrops hanging on the telephone wires had been  
like only sparks glittering against the chalk of the clouds the lead  
of the ocean and the steel of the oil derricks descending as lone  
nuclei down a desolate hillside The wires had been worn by more  
time and years than they had been intended to carry one of them  
had kept sagging through the hours of that morning, under the  
weighty load of raindrops then its one last drop had grown on the  
wire's curve and had hung like a crystal bead gathering the weight  
of many seconds the bead and the wire had given up together and  
fell as the fall of tears the wire had broken and fallen  
with the fall of the bead

The men at the Division Headquarters of Taggart Transconti-  
nental avoided looking at one another when the break of the tele-  
phone line was discovered

ly miscalcula-  
thing, none of

vanishing con-  
few that the division storekeeper had sold the stock of wire  
weeks ago to unknown dealers who came by night and were not  
businessmen in the daytime but only men who had friends in Sacra-  
mento and in Washington—just as the storekeeper recently ap-  
pointed to the division, had a friend in New York named Cuffy  
right, about what—  
an wh  
id not  
party

enemies, that his fellow workers would become mysteriously silent and would not testify to help him, that he would prove nothing. If he attempted to do his job, it would not be his any longer. He did not know what was safe or dangerous these days, when the guilty were not punished, but the accusers were, and, like animals, he knew that immobility was the only protection when in doubt. In danger. They remained immobile, they spoke about the appropriate procedure of sending reports to the appropriate authorities on the appropriate dates.

A young roadmaster walked out of the room and out of the headquarters building to the safety of a telephone booth at a drugstore and at his own expense, ignoring the content and terms of appropriate executives between, he telephoned Daggy Taggart in New York.

She received the call in her brother's office, interrupting an emergency conference. The young roadmaster told her only that the telephone line was broken and that there was no wire to repair. He said nothing else and he did not explain why he had found it necessary to call her in person. She did not question him, she understood. "Thank you," was all that she answered.

An emergency file in her office kept a record of all the emergency materials still on hand, on every division of Taggart Transcontinental. Like the file of a bankrupt, it kept registering losses, and the rare additions of new supplies seemed like the malicious chuck of some tormentor throwing crumbs at a starving content. She looked through the file, closed it, sighed and said "Montana. Eddie Phone the Montana Line to ship half their stock of wire to California. Montana might be able to last without it—for another week." And as Eddie Willers was about to protest, she added, "Eddie California is one of the last producers of oil left in the country. We don't dare lose the Pacific Line." Then she went back to the conference in her brother's office.

"Copper wire?" said James Taggart, with an odd glance went from her face to the city beyond the window. "In a very short while, we won't have any trouble about copper."

"Why?" she asked, but he did not answer. There was nothing special to see beyond the window, only the clear sky of a good day, the quiet light of early afternoon on the roofs of the city above them, the page of the calendar, saying September 2.

She did not know why he had insisted on holding this conference in his own office, why he had insisted on speaking to her at which he had always tried to avoid, or why he kept glancing at his wrist watch.

"Things are, it seems to me, going wrong," he said. "Something has to be done. There appears to exist a state of dislocation, confusion tending toward an uncoordinated, unbalanced position. What I mean is, there's a tremendous national demand for transportation, yet we're losing money. It seems to me—"

She sat looking at the ancestral map of Taggart Transcontinental on the wall of his office, at the red arteries of the western continent. There had been a time when

And the blood system of the nation, and the stream of trains had  
been like a living circuit of blood, bringing growth and wealth to  
every patch of wilderness it touched. Now, it was still like a stream  
of blood, but like the one way stream that runs from a wound,  
bringing the last of a body's sustenance and life. One way traffic—  
thought indifferently—consumers' traffic.

There was Train Number 193, she thought. Six weeks ago, Train  
Number 193 had been sent with a load of steel, not to Faulkton,  
Nebraska, where the Spencer Machine Tool Company, the best  
machine tool concern still in existence had been idle for two weeks,  
waiting for the shipment—but to Sand Creek, Illinois where Con-  
federated Machine had been wallowing in debt for over a year, pro-  
ducing unreliable goods at unpredictable times. The steel had  
been allocated by a directive which explained that the Spencer  
Machine Tool Company was a rich concern, able to wait, while  
Confederated Machines was bankrupt and could not be allowed to  
collapse being the sole source of livelihood of the community  
of Sand Creek, Illinois. The Spencer Machine Tool Company had  
closed a month ago. Confederate Machines had closed two weeks  
ago.

The people of Sand Creek, Illinois, had been placed on national  
relief, but no food could be found for them in the empty granaries  
of the nation at the frantic call of the moment—so the seed grain  
of the farmers of Nebraska had been seized by order of the Unifica-  
tion Board—and Train Number 194 had carried the unplanted har-  
vest and the future of the people of Nebraska to be consumed by  
the people of Illinois. "In this enlightened age" Eugene Lawson  
had said in a radio broadcast, "we have come at last, to realize  
that each one of us is his brother's keeper."

"In a precarious period of emergency like the present. James Tag-  
gart was saying while she looked at the map it is dangerous to  
and ourselves forced to miss pay days and accumulate wage ar-  
rears on some of our divisions a temporary condition, of course  
but—"

She chuckled. "The Railroad Unification Plan isn't working, is  
it, Jim?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You're to receive a big cut of the Atlantic Southern's gross in-  
come out of the common pool at the end of the year—only there  
won't be any gross income left for the pool to seize will there?"

"That's not true! It's just that the bankers are sabotaging the  
Plan. Those bastards—who used to give us loans in the old days  
with no security at all except our own railroad—now refuse to let  
me have a few measly hundred thousands on short term just to take  
care of a few payrolls when I have the entire plant of all the rail-  
roads of the country to offer them as security for my loan!"

She chuckled.

"We couldn't help it," he cried. "It's not the fault of  
that some people refuse to carry their fair share of our b-

"Jim, was this all you wanted to tell me? If it is, I'll be  
work to do."

His eyes shot to his wrist watch. No, no, that's not all. It's urgent that we discuss the situation and arrive at some decision which—

She listened blankly to the next stream of generalities, wondering about his motive. He was marking time yet he wasn't fully satisfied. She felt certain that he was holding her here for some special purpose and simultaneously that he was holding her for the sake of her presence.

It was some new trait in him which she had begun to notice ever since Cherry's death. He had come running to her rush unannounced into her apartment on the evening of the day when Cherry's body had been found and the story of her suicide had been in the newspapers given by some social worker who had written it an inexplicable suicide. The newspapers had called it, unable to discover any motive. 'It wasn't my fault! he had screamed at her as if she were the only judge whom he had to placate. 'not to blame for it! I'm not to blame!' He had been shaking with terror—yet she had caught a few glances thrown shrewdly at his face which had seemed inconceivably to convey a touch of triumph. 'Get out of here, Jim,' was all she had said to him.

He had never spoken to her again about Cherryl but he started coming to her office more often than usual he stopped her in the halls for snatches of pointless discussions—such moments had grown into a sum that gave her an incomprehensible sensation as if while clinging to her for support and protection against some nameless terror his arms were sliding to brace her and to plunge a knife into her back.

I am eager to know your views he was saying insistently  
she looked away

and you have  
if there were no  
but—

"What I mean is some constructive policy has to be devised,"  
droned on hastily "Something has to be done by some-  
body in times of emergency--"

She knew what thought he had scurried to avoid what had given her yet did not want her to acknowledge or discuss knew that no train schedules could be maintained any longer promises kept no contracts observed that regular trains cancelled at a moment's notice and transformed into emergency

had built their power by a purposeful course projected over a  
of time—were left to exist at the whim of the moment a mor  
could not foresee or control. She knew that the best an  
those of the longest range and most op

ing since gone—and those still struggling to produce, struggling  
vaguely to preserve the code of an age when production had been  
possible — — — — —

line shameful to  
"mutting"

ho were able to  
a mystic secret,  
ot in question or

ly and they were the men whose dealings with Cuffy Meigs were  
regarded by people in that unknowable of mystic breeds which  
hates the observer for the sin of looking so people kept their eyes  
fixed — — — — —

new that deals  
own as "trans-  
ne would dare

agency specials,  
send them to  
to strike with  
property jus  
public welfare"

— — — — —  
were the men  
hers and their

captain in Arizona—to the relief of a factory in Florida engaged  
in the production of pin ball machines—to the relief of a horse  
farm in Kentucky—to the relief of Orren Boyle's Associated Steel

These were the men who made deals with desperate industrialists  
to provide transportation for the goods stalled in their warehouses  
—or failing to obtain the percentage demanded made deals to  
purchase the goods when the factory closed at the bankruptcy sale,  
at ten cents on the dollar, and to speed the goods away in freight  
cars suddenly available away to markets where dealers of the same  
kind were ready for the kill. These were the men who hovered over  
factories waiting for the last breath of a furnace to pounce upon the  
its equipment—and over desolate sidings, to pounce upon the  
bright cars of undelivered goods—these were a new biological  
species the hit and run businessmen who did not stay in any line  
of business longer than the span of one deal who had no payrolls  
to meet, no overhead to carry, no real estate to own, no equipment  
to build, whose only asset and sole investment consisted of an item  
known as "friendship." These were the men whom official speeches  
described as "the progressive businessmen of our dynamic age"  
but whom people called "the pull peddlers"—the species included  
many breeds: those of "transportation pull" and of "steel pull" and  
"oil pull" and "wage raise pull" and "suspended sentence pull"—men  
who were dynamic who kept darting all over the country while no  
one else could move, men who were active and mindless active not  
like animals but like that which breeds, feeds and moves upon the  
stillness of a corpse.

She knew that there was money to be had out of the railroad  
business and she knew who was now obtaining it. Cuffy Meigs was  
selling trains as he was selling the last of the railroad's supplies  
whenever he could rig a setup which would not let it be done  
or proved—selling rail to roads in Guatemala or to trolley



panies in Canada, selling wire to manufacturers of juke boxes, selling cross-ties for fuel in resort hotels

Did it matter—she thought, looking at the map—which part the corpse had been consumed by which type of maggot, by those who gorged themselves or by those who gave the food to other maggots? So long as living flesh was prey to be devoured, did it matter whose stomachs it had gone to fill? There was no way to tell which devastation had been accomplished by the humanitarians and which by undisguised gangsters. There was no way to tell which act of plunder had been prompted by the charity lust of the Lawsons and which by the gluttony of Cuffy Meigs—no way to tell which communities had been immolated to feed another community or which week closer to starvation and which to provide yachts for the peddlers. Did it matter? Both were alike in fact as they were alike in spirit: both were in need and need was regarded as sole title to property; both were acting in strictest accordance with the same code of morality. Both held the immolation of men as proper as both were achieving it. There wasn't even any way to tell who were the cannibals and who the victims—the communities that accepted as their rightful due the confiscated clothing or fuel of a town in the east of them, found, next week, their granaries confiscated; to feed a town to the west—men had achieved the ideal of the centuries, they were practicing it in unobstructed perfection, they were serving need as their highest ruler, need as first claim upon their need as their standard of value, as the coin of their realm—more sacred than right and life. Men had been pushed into a pit where shouting that man is his brother's keeper, each was devouring his neighbor and was being devoured by his neighbor's brother. Men were proclaiming the righteousness of the unearned and wondering who was stripping the skin off his back, each was devouring himself while screaming in terror that some unknowable evil was destroying the earth.

'What complaint do they now have to make?' she heard Hui Akston's voice in her mind. "That the universe is irrational? Is it?"

She sat looking at the map, her glance dispassionately solemn; if no emotion save respect were permissible when observing the awesome power of logic. She was seeing—in the chaos of a perishing continent—the precise, mathematical execution of all the ideas men had held. They had not wanted to know that this was what they wanted: the had not wanted to know that this was what they had the power to win.

lechers of pity?—she wondered. What were they counting on? Those who had once simpered: "I don't want to destroy the world. I only want to seize a little of their surplus to help the poor, just a little, they'll never miss it!"—then, later, had snapped: "If tycoons can stand being squeezed they've amassed enough to last them for three generations!"—then, later, had yelled: "Why should the people suffer while businessmen have reserves to last a year?—now were screaming: "Why should we starve while some



and we've got to deal with facts. We've got to take reality as it is now today!

Well take it

"I beg your pardon?"

"Take your reality. I'll merely take your orders."

"That's unfair! I'm asking for your opinion—"

You're asking for reassurance. Jim. You're not going to get it.

I beg your pardon?

I'm not going to help you pretend—by arguing with you—the reality you're talking about is not what it is. That there's still a way to make it work and to save your neck. There isn't."

Well. There was no explosion, no anger—only the feeble, uncertain voice of a man on the verge of abdication. "Well, what would you want me to do?"

Give up. He looked at her blankly. Give up—all of you, and your Washington friends and your looting planners and the whole of your cannibal philosophy. Give up and get out of the way and let those of us who can start from scratch outbuild the ruins.

No! The explosion came oddly now. It was the scream of a man who would die rather than betray his idea, and it came from a man who had spent his life evading the existence of ideas and acting with the expediency of a criminal. She wondered whether she had ever understood the essence of criminals. She wondered about the nature of the loyalty to the idea of denying ideas.

No! he cried, his voice lower, hoarser and more normal, coming from the tone of a zealot to the tone of an overbearing executive. "That's impossible! That's out of the question!"

"Who said so?"

"Never mind! It's so! Why do you always think of the impractical? Why don't you accept reality as it is and do something about it? You're the realist, you're the doer, the mover, the producer. Nat Taggart, you're the person who's able to achieve any goal he chooses! You could save us now, you could find a way to make things work—if you wanted to!"

She burst out laughing.

There she thought was the ultimate goal of all that loose, democratic prattle which businessmen had ignored for years: the end of all the slipshod definitions, the sloppy generalities, the vague abstractions, all claiming that obedience to objective reality is the same as obedience to the State; that there is no difference between a law of nature and a bureaucrat's directive; that a hungry man is not free; that man must be released from the tyranny of food, shelter and clothing—all of it, for years, that the day might come when Nat Taggart, the realist, would be asked to consider the fact of Cuffy Meigs as a fact of nature, irrevocable and absolute, like steel rails and gravitation, to accept the Meigs-made world as objective, unchangeable reality—then to continue producing abundance in that world. There was the goal of all those con-

rary and classroom who sold their revelations as

"as science, their cravings as

the relative, the  
a farmer gather  
- mension unbound  
ner's omnipotent  
man, who then proceed to the farmer to the other to do

to

ard

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our

She drew herself up, her muscles growing rigid, as if she were

Why should you be happy while I suffer? Oh yes, the  
world is yours, you're the one who has the brains to run it. Then  
why do you permit suffering in your world? You proclaim the  
right of happiness, but you doom me to frustration. Don't I have  
a right to demand any form of happiness I choose? Isn't that a  
right which you owe me? Am I not your brother?"

His glance was like a prowler's flashlight searching her face for  
shred of pity. It found nothing but a look of revulsion.

"It's your brother, brother,

y my

have

re so

t you

good, so long as I'm wretched. My misery is the measure  
of your sin. My contentment is the measure of your virtue. I want  
a kind of a world in which I can share of authority,

a moral absolute! Don't you know it! Don't you?  
but you?"

His glance was now like the hands of a man hanging over an  
abyss, groping frantically for the slightest fissure of doubt, but slip-  
ping on the clean, polished rock of her face.

"You bastard," she said evenly, without emotion, since the words  
were not addressed to anything human.

It seemed to her that she saw him fall into the abyss—even  
though there was nothing to see in his face except the look of a  
man whose trick has not worked.

There was no reason to feel more revulsion than usual.  
Thought, he had merely uttered the things which were .

heard and accepted everywhere but this creed was usually pounded in the third person and Jim had had the open effrontery to expound it in the first. She wondered whether people accept the doctrine of sacrifice provided its recipients did not identify nature of their own claims and actions.

She turned to leave.

"No! No! Wait!" he cried leaping to his feet, with a glance at his wrist watch. "It's time now! There's a particular news broadcast that I want you to hear!"

She stopped, held by curiosity.

He pressed the switch of the radio, watching her face open intently, almost insolently. His eyes had a look of fear and oddly lecherous anticipation.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the voice of the radio speaker leaped forth abruptly. It had a tone of panic. "News of a shocking development has just reached us from Santiago, Chile!"

She saw the jerk of Taggart's head and a sudden anxiety in his bewildered frown, as if something about the words and voice was not what he had expected.

A special session of the legislature of the People's State of Chile had been called for ten o'clock this morning to pass an act of utmost importance to the people of Chile, Argentina and other South American People's States. In line with the enlightened policy of Senor Ramirez, the new Head of the Chilean State—who came to power on the moral slogan that man is his brother's keeper—the legislature was to nationalize the Chilean properties of d'Anconia Copper, thus opening the way for the People's State of Argentina to nationalize the rest of the d'Anconia properties the world over. This, however, was known only to a very few of the top-level leaders of both nations. The measure had been kept secret in order to avoid debate and reactionary opposition. The seizure of the multi-billion dollar d'Anconia Copper was to come as a munificent surprise to the country.

"On the stroke of ten, in the exact moment when the chairman's gavel struck the rostrum opening the session—almost as if the gavel's blow had set it off—the sound of a tremendous explosion rocked the hall, shattering the glass of its windows. It came from the harbor, a few streets away—and when the legislators rushed to the windows they saw a long column of flame where once there had risen the familiar silhouettes of the ore docks of d'Anconia Copper. The ore docks had been blown to bits.

"The chairman averted panic and called the session to order. The act of nationalization was read to the assembly to the sound of fire alarm sirens and distant cries. It was a gray morning, dark with rain clouds; the explosion had broken an electric transmitter—so that the assembly voted on the measure by the light of candles while the red glow of the fire kept sweeping over the great vaulted ceiling above their heads.

"But more terrible a shock came later, as the chairman in a hasty recess to announce to the nation that the people now owned d'Anconia Copper. While

legislators called that the work

that  
men,  
an in  
ncona

Apel on the face of the globe, from Chile to Siam to Spain to  
Steville, Montana, had been blown up and swept away

"The d'Ancona workers everywhere had been handed their last  
checks in cash, at nine A M, and by nine thirty had been moved  
from the premises. The ore docks, the smelters, the laboratories, the  
ice buildings were demolished. Nothing was left of the d'Ancona

... had continued to be run, even though exhausted years ago  
"Among the thousands of d'Ancona employees, the police have  
found no one with a  
even conceived, orga  
Ancona staff are r  
recutives, mineralog  
all the men upon  
carry on the work.

most able—correction the most selfish—of the men ...  
ports from the various banks indicate that there are no d'Ancona  
accounts left anywhere, the money has been spent down to the last  
penny

"Ladies and gentlemen, the d'Ancona fortune—the greatest for-  
tune on earth the legendary fortune of the centuries—has ceased  
to exist. In place of the golden dawn of a new age the People's  
States of Chile and Argentina are left with a pile of rubble and  
hordes of unemployed on their hands

"No clue has been found to the fate or the whereabouts of  
Señor Francisco d'Ancona. He has vanished, leaving nothing be-  
hind him, not even a message of farewell

"Thank you, my darling—thank you in the name of the last of us,  
even if you will not hear it and will not care to hear. It was

not a sentence, but the silent emotion of a prayer in her mind  
addressed to the laughing face of a boy she had known at sixteen

Then she noticed that she was clinging to the radio as if the faint  
electric beat within it still held a tie to the only living force on  
earth which it had transmitted for a few brief moments and which  
now filled the room where all else was dead

As distant remnants of the explosion's wreckage she noticed a  
sound that came from Jim, part growl part-scream, part growl—  
then the ... over a telephone and his  
said it was safe!  
d sunk into it?  
his voice snar-  
ie first, "Shut  
God

There were people rushing into the office, the telephones screaming and alternating between pleas and curses, Jim yelling into one receiver, "Get me Santiago! Get Washington to get me Santiago!"

field under the lens of a microscope. She wondered how they ever expect to be taken seriously when a Francisco d'Anconia is possible on earth.

She saw the glare of the explosion in every face she met that the rest of the day—and in every face she passed in the darkness of the streets, that evening. If Francisco had wanted a world funeral pyre for d'Anconia Copper, she thought, he had succeeded. There it was, in the streets of New York City, the only city on earth still able to understand it—in the faces of people in their whispers, the whispers crackling tensely like small tongues of fire, the faces lighted by a look that was both solemn and frantic, the shadings of expressions appearing to sway and waver as if cast by a distant flame, some frightened, some angry, most of them uneasy, uncertain, expectant, but all of them acknowledging the fact much beyond an industrial catastrophe, all of them knowing what it meant, though none would name its meaning. All of them carrying a touch of laughter, a laughter of amusement and defiance, the bitter laughter of perishing victims who feel that they have avenged.

She saw it in the face of Hank Rearden, when she met him at dinner that evening. As his tall, confident figure walked toward her—the only figure that seemed at home in the costly setting of the distinguished restaurant—she saw the look of eagerness, the sternness of his features, the look of a young boy still open to the enchantment of the unexpected. He did not speak of this event, but she knew that it was the only image in his mind.

They had been meeting whenever he came to the city, spending brief, rare evenings together—with their past still alive in their acknowledgment—with no future in their work and in their common struggle, but with the knowledge that they were allies, gaining support from the fact of each other's existence.

He did not want to mention today's event, he did not want to mention the name of Francisco d'Anconia. He sat at the table that he had chosen, his eyes fixed on the wall, his hand on his chest, his voice low and steady. "I am not here to talk about Francisco d'Anconia," he said. "I am here to talk about the future of the world." "He didn't he?"

"His oath?" she asked, startled, thinking of the inscription on the temple of Atlantis.

"He said to me, 'I swear—by the name of my friend' He was a man of his word."

"He is?"

his head. "I have no right to say that." I am not here to talk about the future of the world. have

light to accept what he's done as an act in my defense And

"He stopped

"But it was, Hank In defense of all of us—and of you, most of

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"Tired, Hank?"

"Bored to death."

There was a time, she thought, when his mind, his energy, his inexhaustible resourcefulness had been given to the task of a producer devising better ways to deal with nature, now, they were switched to the task of a criminal outwitting men. She wondered how long a man could endure a change of that kind.

"It's becoming almost impossible to get iron ore," he said differently, then added, his voice suddenly alive, "Now it's going to be completely impossible to get copper." He was grinning.

She wondered how long a man could continue to work against himself, to work when his deepest desire was not to succeed, but fail.

She understood the connection of his thoughts when he said, "I never told you, but I've met Ragnar Danneskjold."

"He told me."

"What? Where did you ever—?" He stopped. "Of course," he said, his voice tense and low. He would be one of them. You would have met him. Dagny, what are they like, those men who—No. Don't answer me." In a moment he added, "So I've met one of their agents."

"You've met two of them."

His response was a span of total stillness. "Of course," he said, dull.

"(

H

night when they got Ken Danagger . . . I thought that they had not sent anyone after me."

The effort by which he made his face grow rigid, was almost like the slow, resisted turn of a key locking a sunlit room he could not permit himself to examine. After a while, he said impassively, "Dagny, that new rail we discussed last month—I don't think I'll be able to deliver it. They haven't lifted their regulations off my output, they're still controlling my sales and disposing of my Metal as they please. But the bookkeeping is in such a snarl that I can't smuggle a few thousand tons into the black market every week. I think they know it. They're pretending not to. They don't want to antagonize me, right now. But, you see, I've been shipping a few tons I could snatch, to some emergency customers of mine. Dagny, I was in Minnesota last month. I've seen what's going on there. The country will starve, not next year, but *this* winter, unless a few of us act and act fast. There are no grain reserves left anywhere. With Nebraska gone, Oklahoma wrecked, North Dakota abandoned, Kansas barely subsisting—there isn't going to be a wheat this winter, not for the city of New York nor for any Eastern city. Minnesota is our last granary. They've had two bad years in succession, but they have a bumper crop this fall—and they have to be able to harvest it. Have a chance to take look at the condition of the farm-equipment? They're not enough, any of them, to keep a gangsters."

Washington or to pay percentages to pull peddlers. So they haven't been getting many allocations of materials. Two-thirds of them are shut down and the rest are about to. And farms are perishing all over the country—for lack of tools. You should have seen those farmers in Minnesota. They've been spending more time mending old tractors that can't be fixed than plowing their fields. I don't know how they managed to survive till last spring. I don't know how they managed to plant their wheat. But they did. They did. There was a look of intensity on his face, as if he were contemplating a rare, forgotten sight—a vision of *men*—and she knew that motive was still holding him to his job. "Dagny, they had no tools for their harvest. I've been selling all the Metal I could cash out of my own mills to the manufacturers of farm equipment. On credit. They've been . . ."

streaming unopposed, through the holes of its windows and the cracks of its roof, with the remnant of a sign. Ward Harvester company.

"Oh, I know," he said. "We'll save them this winter, but the looting will devour them next year. Still, we'll save them this winter."

"What is the use, anyway?"  
"It's all right, Hank. We'll last with such rail as we have, for—"

He stopped.

"For a month?"

"For the winter—I hope."

Cutting across their silence a shrill voice reached them from an-

"But now, at this moment."

"What would you do, if you knew it?"

He dropped his hand in a gesture of futility. "I wouldn't touch him. The only homage I can still pay him is not to cry forgiveness where no forgiveness is possible."

They remained silent. They listened to the voices of the splinter—

She had not been aware that the same presence seemed to be invisible guest at every table, that the same subject kept breaking through the attempts at any other conversation. People sat in manner, not quite of cringing, but as if they found the room too large and too exposed—a room of glass, blue velvet, aluminum and gentle lighting. They looked as if they had come to this room at the price of countless evasions, to let it help them pretend that there was still a civilized existence—but an act of primeval violence had blasted the nature of their world into the open and they were no longer able not to see.

"How could he? How could he?" a woman was demanding with petulant terror. "He had no right to do it!"

"It was an accident," said a young man with a staccato voice and an odor of public payroll. "It was a chain of coincidences, any statistical curve of probabilities can easily prove. It is no patriotic to spread rumors exaggerating the power of the people's enemies."

"Right and wrong in all very well for academic conversations," said a woman with a schoolroom voice and a barroom mouth. "but how can we do it?"

talities, after centuries of teaching, training and indoctrination with the gentle and the humane!"

A woman's bewildered voice rose uncertainly and trailed off. "I thought we were living in an age of brotherhood . . ."

"I'm scared," a young girl was repeating, "I'm scared . . . oh, I don't know! I'm just scared."

"He couldn't have done it!" . . . "He did!" . . . "But why?" . . . "I refuse to believe it!" . . . "It's not human!" . . . "But why?" . . . "Just a worthless playboy!" . . . "But why?"

The muffled scream of a woman across the room and some half grasped signal on the edge of Dagny's vision, came simultaneously and made her whirl to look at the city.

The calendar was run by a mechanism locked in a room behind the screen, unrolling the same film year after year, projecting the dates in steady rotation, in changeless rhythm, never moving but on the stroke of midnight. The speed of Dagny's turn gave her time to see a phenomenon as unexpected as if a planet had reversed its orbit in the sky—she saw the words "September 2" moving upward and vanishing past the edge of the screen.

Then, written across the enormous page, stopping time, in a last message to the world and to the world's motor which was New York, she saw the lines of a sharp, intransigent handwriting.

Brother, you asked for it!

Francisco Domingo Carlos Andres Sebastián d'Anconia. She did not know which shock was greater—the sight of the message or the sound of Rearden's laughter—Rearden, standing on his feet, in full sight and hearing of the room behind him, laughing and giving their moans of panic, laughing in greeting.

reptance of the gift he had tried to reject, in release, in triumph, in  
surrender

Montana,  
Taggart  
nights  
drop  
to the  
sk of

seeing a train, it stopped abruptly and hung still against the eve-  
ning sky, between a string of empty cars and piles of suddenly  
immovable ore.

The men of the mine stopped in dazed be-  
equip-  
gauges,  
as of a  
topped,  
and horsepower

humane

Minnesota, Eddie," said Dagny grimly, closing the drawer of  
her special file "Tell the Minnesota Division to ship half their stock  
of wire to Montana." "But good God, Dagny!—with the peak of the  
harvest rush approaching—" "They'll hold through it—I think. We  
don't dare lose a single supplier of copper."

"But I have!" screamed James Taggart, when she reminded him  
once more "I have obtained for you the top priority on copper  
wire the first claim the uppermost ration level I've given you  
all the cards, certificates, documents and requisitions—what else  
do you want?" "The copper wire." "I've done all I could! Nobody  
can blame me!"

his desk  
emergency  
a state's  
corpora-  
d com-

gross income ahead of other taxes, the Com-  
panies had gone out of business

voice over a long-  
wanted to assure  
asked Rearden.  
California. We'll

straighten it out in no time, it was an act of legal insurrection.  
their state government had no right to impose local taxes de-  
mental to national taxes, we'll negotiate an equitable  
immediately—but in the meantime, if you have been

any unpatriotic rumors about the California wanted to tell you that Rearden Steel has b category of essential need with first claim anywhere in the nation very top category just wanted you to know that you won't problem of fuel this winter!

Rearden hung up the telephone receiver not about the problem of fuel and the fields—disasters of this kind had become fact that the Washington planners found This was new he wondered what it meant struggle he had learned that an apparer was not hard to deal with but an apparentl an ugly danger The same wonder struck l down an alley between the mill structure slouching figure whose posture combined an air of expecting to be swatted it was

Ever since he had moved to Philadelphia his former home and had not heard a wor bills he went on paying Then, inexplicat weeks he had caught Philip wandering i apparent reason He had been unable to sneaking to avoid him or waiting to ca looked like both He had been unable to di purpose only some incomprehensible sol had never displayed before

The first time in answer to his startl here? —Philip had said vaguely Well like me to come to your office What do

but well Mother is worried a call me any time she wishes" Philip ha proceeded to question h m in an uncon about his work his health his business hitting oddly beside the point not quest more about his Rearden's feelings toward him short and waved him away bu small nagging sense of an incident that re

The second time Philip had said as a want to know how you feel " "Who's we? I These are difficult times and well how you feel about it all "Tell her that seemed to hit Philip in some peculiar man the one answer he dreaded "Get out of he wearily "and the next time you want to ment and come to my office But don't co thing to say This is not a place where or or anybody else's"

Philip had not called for an appointment again slouching among the giant shapes a r of guilt and snobbishness together, as alummung



"I wasn't born owning a steel plant."

"Was I?"

"I can do anything you can—if you'll teach me."

"Who taught me?"

"Why do you keep saying that? I'm not talking about you!"

"I am."

In a moment, Philip muttered, "What do you have to worry about? It's not your livelihood that's in question!"

Rearden pointed to the figures of men in the steaming rays of the furnace. "Can you do what they're doing?"

"I don't see what you're—"

"What will happen if I put you there and you ruin a heat of steel for me?"

"What's more important, that your damn steel gets poured so that I eat?"

"How do you propose to eat if the steel doesn't get poured?"

Philip's face assumed a look of reproach. "I'm not in a position to argue with you right now, since you hold the upper hand."

"Then don't argue."

"Uh?"

"Keep your mouth shut and get out of here."

"But I meant—" He stopped.

Rearden chuckled. "You meant that it's I who should keep my mouth shut? Here as I hold the upper hand and should give in to principle?"

"n't it?"

"We're discussing a job in a steel plant—and, boy! is that a materialistic place!"

Philip's body drew a shade tighter together and his eyes became a shade more glazed, as if in fear of the place around him, in resentment of its sight, in an effort not to concede its reality. He had in the soft, stubborn whine of a voodoo incantation, "It's a moral imperative, universally conceded in our day and age, that every man is entitled to a job." His voice rose. "I'm entitled to it!"

"You are? Go on, then, collect your claim."

"Uh?"

"Collect your job. Pick it off the bush where you think it grows."

"I mean—"

"You mean that it doesn't? You mean that you need it, but can't create it? You mean that you're entitled to a job which I must create for you?"

"Yes!"

"And if I don't?"

The silence went stretching through second after second. "I don't understand you," said Philip, his voice had the angry bewilderment of a man who recites the formulas of a well-tested but keeps getting the wrong cues in answer. "I don't want to talk to you any more. I don't like you re propounding and—"

"I don't understand you, but keep why are you there?"

yes you do"

(refusing to believe that the formulas could fail Philip burst  
th "Since when did you take to abstract philosophy? You're  
businessman you're not qualified to deal with questions of  
de, you ought to leave it to the experts who have conceded  
stures—"

t it, Philip What's the gammuck?"

nmuck?"

by the sudden ambition?"

ill in a time like this . "

ce what?"

ill every man has the right to have some means of support  
and not be left to be tossed aside When things are  
ertain, a man's got to have some security some foothold  
mean, at a time like this, if anything happened to you, I'd  
go—"

hat do you expect to happen to me?"

I don't I don't!" The cry was oddly, incomprehensibly  
re. "I don't expect anything to happen! Do you?"

ch as what?"

rw do I know? But I've got nothing except the pittance  
ve me and and you might change your mind any time"  
might."

ed I haven't any hold on you at all."

by did it take you that many years to realize it and start  
ing? Why now?

cause because you've changed You you used to  
a sense of duty and moral responsibility but you're

t it You're losing it, aren't you?"

arden stood studying him silently there was something peculiar  
ill's manner of sliding toward questions as if his words were  
ental but the too casual, the faintly insistent questions were  
ry to his purpose

ell, I'll be glad to take the burden off your shoulders if I'm  
den to you' Philip snapped suddenly "Just give me a job and  
conscience won't have to bother you about me any longer!"

Doesn't."

hat's what I mean! You don't care You don't care what be-  
s of any of us, do you?"

If whom?"

Why Mother and me and and mankind in general.  
I'm not ———— your better self I know that you're

you're worried about If  
ash not for a job not—"  
ediate and almost frantic  
int a job!"

pull yourself together, you put it off Do you hear  
re saying?"

Philip spit his answer with a test hatred "You  
me that



Can you?"

I only—

"To buy you off? Why should I try to buy you off—instead kicking you out as I should have years ago?"

"Well after all I'm your brother!"

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"One's supposed to have some sort of feeling for one's brother."

"Do you?"

Philip's mouth swelled petulantly he did not answer he waited. Rearden let him wait Philip muttered, "You're supposed at least to have some consideration for my feelings if you haven't."

Have you for mine?"

"Yours? Your feelings?" It was not malice in Philip's voice. It was worse it was a genuine and giant astonishment. "You haven't any feelings. You've never felt anything at all. You've never suffered."

It was as if a sum of years hit Rearden in the face by means of sensation and a sight the exact sensation of what he had felt in the cab of the first train's engine on the John Galt Line—and the sight of Philip's eyes the pale half liquid eyes presenting the utterance of human degradation an uncontested pain and with the obscene insolence of a skeleton toward a living being demanding that his pain be held as the highest of values. "You've never suffered," his eyes were saying to him accusingly—while he was seeing the moment when his office when his ore mines were taken away from him—the moment when he had signed the Gift Certificate surrendering Rearden Metal—the month of days inside a plane that searched for the remains of Dagny's body. "You've never suffered," the eyes were saying with self righteous scorn—while he remembered the sensation of proud chastity with which he had fought through the moments refusing to surrender to pain, a sensation made of the love of his loyalty of his knowledge that joy is the goal of existence and joy is not to be stumbled upon, but to be achieved, and the act of treason is to let his vision drown in the swamp of the moments torture. "You've never suffered," the dead stare of the eyes was saying "you've never felt anything because only to suffer is to feel—there's no such thing as joy there's only pain and the absence of pain only pain and the zero when one feels nothing—I suffer. I'm twisted by suffering. I'm made of undiluted suffering that's my purity that's my virtue—and yours you the untwisted one you the uncomplaining yours is to relieve me of my pain—cut your suffering body to patch up mine cut your unfeeling soul to stitch mine from feeling—and we'll achieve the ultimate ideal the triumph over life the zero!" He was seeing the nature of those who for centuries had not recoiled from the preachers of annihilation he was seeing the nature of the enemies he had been fighting all his life.

"Philip" he said "get out of here." His voice was like a ray of sunlight in a morgue it was the plain dry daily voice of a business man in the sound of health addressed to an enemy one could not hurt by anger nor even by horror. "And don't ever try to en-

s tone of a  
a job here

to look ■

at moment of grasping a sudden revelation was not accom-  
plished by means of thought, but by means of that dark sensation  
which was his only mode of consciousness—he felt a sensation of  
squeezing his throat, shivering down into his stomach—he  
saw the spread of the mills, with the roving streamers of  
molten metal sailing through space on deli-  
cates with open pits the color of glowing coal with cranes  
at his head pounding past holding tons of steel by the  
power of magnets—and he knew that he was afraid of this  
afraid to the death, that he dared not move without the  
aid and guidance of the man before him—then he looked at  
the straight figure standing casually still the figure with the un-  
fathomable eyes whose sight had cut through rock and flame to build  
up—and then he knew how easily the man he was proposing  
could let a single bucket of metal tilt over a second  
if its time or let a single crane drop its load a foot short  
of the mark, and there would be nothing left of him of Philip the  
strong—and his only protection lay in the fact that his mind  
banned such actions, but the mind of Hank Rearden would

would better keep it on a friendly basis " said Philip  
and better said Rearden and walked away  
who worship pain—thought Rearden, staring at the image of  
men he had never been able to understand—they're men  
who worship pain. It seemed monstrous yet peculiarly devoid of  
life. He felt nothing. It was like trying to summon emotion  
animate objects toward refuse sliding down a mountain  
rush him. One could flee from the slide or build retaining  
walls against it or be crushed—but one could not grant any anger,  
concern or moral concern to the senseless motions of the un-  
feeling or worse he thought—the anti-living  
sense of detached unconcern remained with him while  
he sat in a Philadelphia courtroom and watched men perform the  
ritual which were to grant him his divorce. He watched them  
mechanical generalities recite vague phrases of fraudulent  
play an intricate game of stretching words to convey no  
real meaning. He had paid them to do it—he whom the  
law offered no other way to gain his freedom no right to state  
his case and plead the truth—the law which delivered his fate not  
to the rule of law or justice but to the arbitrary mercy of

made  
through  
they

its reason no other reason had existed for years where no standard save whim had existed They seemed to regard it as their right to do as they pleased and the procedure were

questions of right and wrong were irrelevant and they in charge of dispensing justice were safely wise enough to know no justice existed They acted like savages performing a rite devised to set them free of objective reality

But the ten years of his marriage had been real, he thought—these were the men who assumed the power to dispose of it to

sharing a common guilt mutually safe from moral censure Then when they observed that he was the only man in the room who looked steadily straight at anyones face he saw resentment growing in their eyes Incredulously, he realized what it was had been expected of him he, the victim chained bound gagged and left with no recourse save to bribery, had been expected to believe that the farce he had purchased was a process of law that the edicts enslaving him had moral validity, that he was guilty of corrupting the integrity of the guardians of justice and that blame was his not theirs It was like blaming the victim of a bolt for corrupting the integrity of the thug And yet—he thought through all the generations of political extortion it was not the looting bureaucrats who had taken the blame but the chain industrialists not the men who peddled legal favors but the men who were forced to buy them and through all those generations of crusades against corruption the remedy had always been not the liberating of the victims but the granting of wider powers of extortion to the extortionists The only guilt of the victims, he thought had been that they accepted it as guilt

When he walked out of the courtroom into the chilly drizzle of a gray afternoon he felt as if he had been divorced not only from Lillian but from the whole of the human society that supported the procedure he had witnessed

The face of his attorney an elderly man of the old fashioned school wore an expression that made it look as if he longed to take a bath "Say Hank," he asked as sole comment "is there something the looters are anxious to get from you right now?" "Not that I know of Why?" "The thing went too smoothly There were a few points at which I expected pressure and hints for some reason but the boys sailed past and took no advantage of it Looks to me as if orders had come from on high to treat you gently and let you have your way Are they planning something against your mind

"that I know of," said Rearden—and was astonished to hear him say: "Not that I care."

It was on the same afternoon, at the mills, that he saw the Wet man hurrying toward him—a gangling, coltish figure with a queer mixture of brusqueness, awkwardness and decisiveness. "Mr. Rearden, I would like to speak to you." His voice was diffident, yet oddly firm.

"There's something I want to ask you." The boy's face was open and tant. "I want you to know that I know you should tell me but I want to ask you just the same—and—and if presumptuous then just tell me to go to hell."

"Why? Try it." Mr. Rearden, would you give me a job?" It was the effort to be normal that betrayed the days of struggle behind the question. "I want to quit what I'm doing and go to work. I mean real work—real making like I thought I'd started to, once I want to earn my keep. I'm tired of being a bedbug."

Rearden could not resist smiling and reminding him, in the tone of quotation: "Now why use such words? Non Absolute? If we use ugly words we won't have any ugliness and—" But he was so desperate earnestness of the boy's face and stopped, his face vanishing.

"I mean it, Mr. Rearden. And I know what the word means and the right word. I'm tired of being paid with your money, to do nothing except make it impossible for you to make any money. And I know that anyone who works today is only a sucker for words."

"What?"  
"A per cent."  
"Well, he went on in his woodenly unemotional tone. "I don't get out of the Deputy Director-of-Distribution racket. I don't care that I'd be of much use to you. I've got a college diploma in Metallurgy but that's not worth the paper it's printed on. But I've been a man or deputy or this or that for ten not

"in a manner of evasion but as if he had said: 'Why were you afraid to ask me?'" said Rearden gently. The boy glanced at him with indignation and astonishment as if the answers were self-evident. "Because after the way I started here and the way I acted and what I'm deputy of if I come asking you for a job you ought to kick me in the teeth!"

"You have learned a great deal in the two years you've been here."

"No I—" He glanced at Rearden, understood, looked away. "I'm woodenly 'Yerth' if that's what you mean."

"Listen kid I'd give you a job this minute and I'd trust you more than a job, if it were up to me. But he

gotten the Unification Board? I'm not allowed to hire you and you not allowed to quit. Sure men are quitting all the time and hiring others under phony names and fancy papers proving they've worked here for years. You know it and thanks for keeping your mouth shut. But do you think that if I hired you that your friends in Washington would miss it?

The boy shook his head slowly.

Do you think that if you quit their service to become a sweeper they wouldn't understand your reason?

The boy nodded.

"Would they let you go?"

The boy shook his head. After a moment he said in a tone of forlorn astonishment:

I forgot them. I kept and that the only thing

I know

"And it is the only thing that counts in fact."

Yes. Non Absolute in fact.

The boy's mouth jerked suddenly into the brief, mirthless twist of a smile. I guess I'm tied worse than any sucker.

"Yes. There's nothing you can do now except apply to the Unification Board for permission to change your job. I'll support your application if you want to try—only I don't think they'll grant it. I don't think they'll let you work for me."

"No. They won't."

"If you maneuver enough and lie enough they might permit a transfer to a private job—with some other steel company."

"No. I don't want to go anywhere else! I don't want to leave this place!" He stood looking off at the invisible vapor of rain over the flame of the furnaces. After a while he said quietly: "I'd better stay put. I guess I'd better go on being a deputy looter. Besides, I left. God only knows what sort of bastard they'd saddle you in my place!" He turned. They're up to something. Mr. Rearden, I don't know what it is, but they're getting ready to spring something on you.

What?"

I don't know. But they've been watching every opening here the last few weeks, every desertion and slipping their own gang. A queer sort of gang, too—real goons, some of them that I'd never stepped inside a steel plant before. I've had orders to get many of our boys in as possible. They wouldn't tell me why. I don't know what it is they're planning. I've tried to pump them, but they're acting pretty cagey about it. I don't think they trust me any more. I'm losing the right touch. I guess all I know is they're getting set to pull something here.

Thanks for warning me.

"I'll try to get the dope on it. I'll try my damndest to get it in time." He turned brusquely and started off but stopped. "Rearden, if it were up to you, you would have hired me?"

"I would have, gladly and at once."

"Thank you Mr Rearden," he said his voice solemn and low, walked away  
Rearden stood looking after him seeing with a tearing smile of what it was that the ex relativist the ex pragmatist the ex realist was carrying away with him for consolation.

In the afternoon of September 11, a copper wire broke in Minneapolis - a wire station

men who had lived through two years of disaster for the triumphant harvest of this autumn's giant harvest men who had patched their cks and carts with wire blankets ropes and sleepless nights to like them hold together for this one more journey to carry the men and collapse at destination but to give their owners a chance survival

Every year at this season another movement had gone clicking now the country drawing freight cars from all corners of the continent to the Minnesota Division of Taggart Transcontinental, the beat of train wheels preceding the creak of the wagons like an echo rigorously planned ordered and tuned to meet the need. The Minnesota Division drowsed through the year to come violent life for the sounds of the harvest fourteen thousand freight cars had jammed its yards each year fifteen thousand were expected this time The first of the wheat trains had started to change the flood into the hungry flour mills then bakeries then stomachs of the nation—but every train car and storage elevator to spare

ough the cards  
e cards by her  
the file "Phone  
ir stock of wire

er desk a tele  
ing them of the  
r ordered gov

the wheat, due to the all the  
ment agents to seize all copper mines and operate them as a  
public utility "Well" she said dropping the telegram into the  
wastebasket, "that's the end of Montana"  
She said nothing when James Taggart announced to her that he  
was issuing an order to discontinue all dining cars on Taggart  
trains "We can't afford it any longer" he explained "we've alw  
lost money on those goddamn diners, and when there's no  
pet, when resta rants are closing because they can't grab hol  
pound of  
anywhere how can railroads be

do it? Why in hell should we have to feed the passengers, any? They're lucky if we give them transportation, they'd travel in cabs if necessary, let 'em pack their own box lunches, what do we care?—they've got no other trains to take!"

The telephone on her desk had become, not a voice of business but an alarm siren for the desperate appeals of disaster. "Miss Taggart, we have no copper wire!" "Nails, Miss Taggart, plain nails—could you tell somebody to send us a keg of nails?" "Can you get any paint, Miss Taggart, any sort of waterproof paint anywhere?"

But thirty million dollars of subsidy money from Washington had been plowed into Project Soybean—an enormous acreage in Louisiana, where a harvest of soybeans was ripening, as advocated and organized by Emma Chalmers, for the purpose of reconducing the dietary habits of the nation. Emma Chalmers, better known as Kip's Ma, was an old sociologist who had hung about Washington for years, as other women of her age and type hang about the rooms. For some reason which nobody could define, the death of her son in the tunnel catastrophe had given her in Washington an aura of martyrdom, heightened by her recent conversion to Buddhism. "The soybean is a much more sturdy, nutritious and economical plant than all the extravagant foods which our wasteful self-indulgent diet has conditioned us to expect," Kip's Ma had said over the radio, her voice always sounded as if it were falling in drops, not of water, but of mayonnaise. "Soybeans make an excellent substitute for bread, meat, cereals and coffee—and if all of us were compelled to adopt soybeans as our staple diet, it would solve the national food crisis and make it possible to feed the people. The greatest food for the greatest number—that's my slogan. At a time of desperate public need, it's our duty to sacrifice our luxurious tastes and eat our way back to prosperity by adapting ourselves to the simple, wholesome foodstuff on which the people of the Orient have so nobly subsisted for centuries. There's a good deal that we could learn from the diet of the Orient."

for . . . . .  
"Re . . . . .  
bulbs, Miss Taggart, there's no electric light bulbs to be had anywhere within two hundred miles of us!"

But five million dollars was being spent by the office of Motion Picture Conditioning on the People's Opera Company, which traveled through the country . . . . .

industrialist traveling to save his factory was not considered as  
specially needed and could not get aboard a plane; an official travel-  
to collect taxes was not.

to be completed in ten years

"The trouble with our modern world," Dr. Robert Stadler said  
on the radio, at the ceremonies launching the construction of the  
Atom, "is that too many people think too much. It is the cause of  
our current fears and doubts. An enlightened citizenry should  
ignore the Atom."

Only experts are able to understand the discoveries of  
modern science, which have proved that thought is an illusion and  
that the mind is a myth."

"This age of misery is God's punishment to man for the sin of  
pride on his mind!" snarled the triumphant voices of mystics of  
every sect and sort, on street corners, in rain-soaked tents, in  
smoking temples. "This world ordeal is the result of man's attempt  
to live by reason! This is where thinking, logic and science have  
brought you! And there!"

And  
th, fa

the bear and collector—Cuffy Meigs, the man impervious to thought.  
Cuffy Meigs strode through the offices of Taggart Transcontinental,  
wearing a semi-military tunic and slapping a shiny leather briefcase  
against his shiny leather leggings. He carried an automatic pistol  
in one pocket and a rabbit's foot in the other.

Cuffy Meigs tried to avoid her; his manner was part scorn, as if he  
considered her

to go

it to

to a

challenge. There was a touch of impatient resentment in his man-  
ner toward Jim, as if it were Jim's duty to deal with her and to  
protect him.

laster  
blank





... the ... only there

last twenty  
gle constant

at had made them possible—by the soft, loose faces of men who  
right to hide from themselves that they knew the answers to the  
questions she asked.

From the moment when she was told that the manager of the Car  
Service Department had been out of town for a week and had left  
no address where one could reach him—she knew that the report of  
a man from Minnesota was true. Then came the faces of the assist-  
ants in the Car Service Department, who would neither confirm the  
report nor deny it, but kept showing her papers, orders, forms, file

"Form

"office of

he comp-

t to Min-

iber have

nesota?"

ite, classi-

tion and—"Do you know whether the cars went out to Min-  
nesota?" "As to the interstate motion of freight cars, I would have  
refer you to the files of Mr. Benson and of—"

There was nothing to learn from the files. There were careful  
his meanings with references which

which was missing

or that the cars had

ad come from Cuffy

d tangled the trail,

at steps had been taken by what compliant men to preserve the  
variance of a safely normal operation without a single cry of  
test to arouse some braver man's attention who had falsified the  
orts, and where the cars had gone—seemed, at first, impossible  
learn.

Through the hours of that night—while a small desperate crew  
for the command of Eddie Willers kept calling every division  
ent, every yard, depot, station, spur and siding of Taggart Trans-

from face to coward's face the destination of the freight cars that had vanished

She went from railroad executives to wealthy shippers to Washington officials and back to the railroad—by cab by phone, by wire—pursuing a trail of help and hope. The trail approached its end when she heard in a Washington office

"Well after all, it's all for the good of the nation's welfare—there are those of more progressive view who feel that the soybean is perhaps of far greater value"—and then by noon she stood in the middle of her office knowing that the freight cars intended for the wheat of Minnesota had been sent, instead to carry the soybeans from the Louisiana swamps of Kip Ma's project

The first story of the Minnesota disaster appeared in the newspapers three days later. It reported that the farmers who had waited in the streets of Lakewood for six days with no place to store the wheat and no trains to carry it, had demolished the local courthouse, the mayor's home and the railroad station. Then the stories vanished abruptly and the newspapers kept silent, then began to print admonitions urging people not to believe unpatriotic rumors.

While the flour mills and grain markets of the country were screaming over the phones and the telegraph wires sending pleas to New York and delegations to Washington while strings of freight cars from random corners of the continent were crawling like rusty caterpillars across the map in the direction of Minnesota—the wheat and hope of the country were waiting to perish along an empty track under the unchanging green light of signals that called for motion to trains that were not there.

At the communication desks of Taggart Transcontinental, a small crew kept calling for freight cars repeating like the crew of a sinking ship an SOS that remained unheard. There were freight cars held loaded for months in the yards of the companies owned by the friends of pull peddlers who ignored the frantic demands to unload the cars and release them. "You can tell that railroad to—"

fol . . .  
Br . . .  
Mr . . .

Mr . . . had stood waiting for a dribble of iron. They were pouring wheat into ore cars into coal cars into boarded stock cars that were spilling thin gold trickles along the track as they clattered off. They were pouring wheat into passenger coaches, over seats racks and fixtures to send it off to get it moving even if it went moving up track side ditches in the sudden crash of breaking springs, in the explosions set off by burning journal boxes.

They fought for movement for movement with no destination for movement as such like a paralytic struggling in wild stiff incredulous jerks against the resistance. Movement was suddenly impossible. There were no cars.

Taggart had killed them, there were no boats.

bul Larkin had destroyed them. There was only the single line of  
rail and a net of neglected highways.

The trucks and wagons of waiting farmers started trickling blindly  
own the roads with no maps, no gas, no feed for horses—moving  
south toward the vision of flour mills awaiting them some-  
where with no knowledge of the distances ahead, but with the  
knowledge of death behind them—moving, to collapse on the roads,  
in the gulches in the breaks of rotted bridges. One farmer was  
found, half a mile south of the wreck of his truck, lying dead in a

The men in Washington were last to be reached by the panic  
they watched, not the news from Minnesota, but the precarious bal-  
ance of their friendships and commitments, they weighed not the  
size of the harvest, but the unknowable result of unpredictable emo-  
tions in unthinking men of unlimited power. They waited they  
traded all pleas, they declared, "Oh ridiculous there's nothing to  
worry about! Those Taggart people have always moved that wheat  
on schedule, they'll find some way to move it!"

Then when the State Chief Executive of Minnesota sent a request  
to Washington for the assistance of the Army against the riots he  
was unable to control—three directives burst forth within two hours,  
stopping all trains in the country commandeering all cars to speed  
to Minnesota. An order signed by Wesley Mouch demanded the  
immediate release of the freight cars held in the service of hip's Ma.  
But by that time, it was too late. Ma's freight cars were in Cali-  
fornia where the soybeans had been sent to a progressive concern  
made up of sociologists preaching the cult of Oriental austerity, and  
of businessmen formerly in the numbers racket.

In Minnesota farmers were setting fire to their own farms they  
were demolishing grain elevators and the homes of county of-  
ficials they were fighting along the track of the railroad some to  
stop it and some to let it pass—and with no goal to

streets of gutted towns

of grain rotting in half  
smoldering piles—a few columns of smoke rising from the plains  
standing still in the air over blackened ruins—and in an office in  
Washington a man sat at his desk looking at a list of  
farm  
him  
dry  
con-

had been reaped prematurely.  
deception

On the night of October 15 a copper wire broke in  
an underground control tower of the Taggart Te-  
legraph  
signals.



consoling her, but worse an attempt to delude themselves into believing that she had agreed. They asked her questions at times and interrupted her before she had completed the first sentence of the answer. They seemed to want her approval, without having to know whether she approved or not.

Some crudely childish form of self-deception had made them choose to give to this occasion the decorous setting of a formal dinner. They acted as if they hoped to gain from the objects of various luxury, the power and the honor of which those objects had once been the product and symbol—they acted she thought like

winning away

She wore a black dress that looked as if it were no more than a piece of cloth crossed over her breasts and falling to her feet in the soft folds of a Grecian tunic, it was made of satin—a satin so light and thin that it could have served as the stuff of a nightgown. Theuster of the cloth.

It looked proper, it underscored the phant fragility of her figure giving her an air of so natural an elegance that it could afford to be scornfully anal. She wore a single piece of jewelry—a diamond clip at the edge of the black neckline that kept flashing with the imperceptible motion of her breath like a transformer converting a flicker into fire making one conscious not of the gems but of the living beat rebounding them—it flashed like a military decoration like wealth worn as a badge of honor. She wore no other ornament only the sweep of a black velvet cape more arrogantly ostentatiously patrician than any spread of sables.

She regretted it now as she looked at the men before her she felt the embarrassing guilt of pointlessness as if she had tried to defy the figures in a wayworks. She saw a mindless resentment in their eyes and a sneaking trace of the lifeless sexless smutty leer with which men look at a poster advertising burlesque.

"It's a great responsibility," said Eugene Lawton to hold the decision of life or death over thousands of people and to sacrifice them when necessary but we must have the courage to do it." His old lips seemed to twist into a smile.

"The only factors to consider are land acreage and population figures," said Dr. Ferris in a statistical voice blowing smoke rings at the ceiling. "Since it is no longer possible to maintain both the Minnesota Line and the transcontinental traffic of this railroad since is between Minnesota and those states west of the R.

which were cut off by the failure of the Taggart Tunnel, as well as the neighboring  
practically speak  
the acreage and  
we should scutt  
munication over a third of a continent "

"I won't give up the continent," said Wesley Mouch, staring down at his dish of ice cream, his voice hurt and stubborn.

She was thinking of the Mesabi Range, the last of the major sources of iron ore, she was thinking of the Minnesota farmers, such as were left of them, the best producers of wheat in the country—she was thinking that the end of Minnesota would end Wisconsin, then Michigan, then Illinois—she was seeing the red bread of the factories dying out over the industrial East—as against the empty miles of western sands, of scraggly pastures and abandoned ranches.

"The figures indicate," said Mr. Weatherby primly, "that the continued maintenance of both areas seems to be impossible. The railway track and equipment of one has to be dismantled to provide the material for the maintenance of the other."

She noticed that Clem Weatherby, their technical expert on railroads, was the man of least influence among them, and Cuffy Meigs—of most. Cuffy Meigs sat sprawled in his chair, with a look of patronizing tolerance for their game of wasting time on discussions. He spoke little, but when he did, it was to snap decisively, with a contemptuous grin, "Pipe down, Jimmy!" or, "Nuts, Wes, you're talking through your hat!" She noticed that neither Jim nor Mouch resented it. They seemed to welcome the authority of his assurance; they were accepting him as their master.

"We have to be practical," Dr. Ferris kept saying. "We have to be scientific."

"I need the economy of the country as a whole," Wesley Mouch kept repeating. "I need the production of a nation."

"Is it economics that you're talking about? Is it production?" she said, whenever her cold, measured voice was able to seize a brief stretch of their time. "If it is, then give us leeway to save the Eastern states. That's all that's left of the country—and of the world. If you let us save that, we'll have a chance to rebuild the rest. If not, it's the end. Let the Atlantic Southern take care of such transcontinental traffic as still exists. Let the local railroads take care of the Northwest. But let Taggart Transcontinental drop everything else—yes, everything—and devote all our resources, equipment and rail to the traffic of the Eastern states. Let us shrink back to the start of this country, but let us hold that start. We'll run no trains west of the Missouri. We'll become a local railroad—the local of the industrial East. Let us save our industries. There's nothing left to save in the West. You can run agriculture for centuries by manual labor and oxen. But destroy the last of this country's industrial plant—and centuries of effort won't be able to rebuild it or to gather the industrial strength to make a start. How do you expect our industrial railroads—to survive without steel? How do you expect





his fingers and once in a while stick a knife into the body of starved toil-dazed germ-eaten creature as a claim to a few grains

expropriate the factories of others was their acknowledgment of the factories value. She born of the industrial revolution had not her mother's instincts and emotions that so long as she

board are not easily ruled but men who live by digging the earth with their naked fingers are—that the feudal baron did not need electronic factories in order to drink his brains away out of jeweled goblets and neither did the rajahs of the People's State of India.

She saw what they wanted and to what goal their "instincts" which the

because she could not conceive of what would bring human beings such a state—indifference because she could not regard those who reached it as human any longer. They went on talking but she

her head up she saw the courteous figure of a man "the assistant manager of the Taggart Terminal is on the telephone requesting permission to speak to you at once. He says it's emergency."

It was a relief to leap to her feet and get out of that room as if in answer to the call of some new disaster. It was a relief to hear the assistant manager's voice even though it was saying "The interlocker system is out. Miss Taggart. The signals are dead. There are eight incoming trains held up and six outgoing. We can't move them in or out of the tunnels. We can't find the chief engineer. We can't locate the breach in the circuit. We have no copper wire for repairs. We don't know what to do. We—" "I'll be right down," said dropping the receiver.

Hurrying to the elevator then half running through the station

ward her the ray of a lamppost sweeping over lustrous hair,  
red arms the swirl of a black cape and the flame of a diamond  
her breast, with the long, empty corridor of a city street behind

knowledge  
tor of a  
enchant  
belonged

in bitterness in longing—that this feeling was the  
use of expectation she had felt at her first ball and at those rare  
times when she had wanted the outward beauty of existence to match  
inner splendor. What a time to think of it! she told herself in  
rockery—not now! she cried to herself in anger—but a desolate  
voice kept asking her quietly to the rattle of the taxi's wheels. You  
do believe you must live for your happiness what do you now  
have left of it?—what are you gaining from your struggle?—yes!  
is it honestly what's in it for you?—or are you becoming one of  
those abstract altruists who has no answer to that question any longer?

Not now!—she ordered as the glowing entrance to the Tag  
Terminal flared up in the rectangle of the taxi's windshield.  
The men in the Terminal manager's office were like extinguished  
candles as if here too a circuit were broken and there were no living  
current to make them move. They looked at her with a kind of  
inanimate passivity as if it made no difference whether she let them  
stay still or threw a switch to set them in motion.

The Terminal manager was absent. The chief engineer could not  
be found. He had been seen at the Terminal two hours ago, not  
more than . . . . .  
signal  
saying  
aggravated

But this has never happened before. The interlocker has never failed. It's not supposed to fail. We know  
our jobs. We can take care of it as well as anybody can—but not if  
it breaks down when it's not supposed to! She could not tell  
whether the dispatcher, an elderly man with years of railroad work  
behind him, still retained his intelligence but chose to hide it or  
whether months of suppressing it had choked it for good, grant  
him the safety of stagnation.

"We don't know what to do, Miss Taggart." "We don't know  
what to call for what sort of permission." "There are no rules."

an emergency of this kind " "There aren't even any rules about who to lay down the rules for it"

She listened she reached for the telephone without a word of explanation she ordered the operator to get her the operating vice president of the Atlantic Southern in Chicago, to get him home and out of bed if necessary.

"George? Dagny Taggart," she said, when the voice of her competitor came on the wire "Will you lend me the signal engineer of your Chicago terminal Charles Murray, for twenty-four hours? . . . Yes . . . Right . . . Put him aboard a plane and get him here as fast as you can Tell him we'll pay three thousand dollars . . . Yes for the one day . . . Yes as bad as that . . . Yes, I'll pay him in cash, out of my own pocket, if necessary I'll pay whatever it takes to bribe his way aboard a plane, but get him on the first plane out of Chicago . . . No George, not one—not a single mind left on Taggart Transcontinental . . . Yes, I'll get all the papers, exemptions, exceptions and emergency permissions. . . . Thanks, George So long"

She hung up and spoke rapidly to the men before her, not to let the stillness of the room and of the Terminal, where no sound of wheels was beating any longer, not to hear the bitter words which the stillness seemed to repeat Not a single mind left on Taggart Transcontinental

"Get a wrecking train and crew ready all once," she said "Send them out on the Hudson Line, with orders to tear down every foot of copper wire, any copper wire, lights, signals, telephone, everything that's company property Have it here by morning" "But, Mr Taggart! Our service on the Hudson Line is only temporarily suspended and . . ."

said, rising to her feet

They followed her as she hurried down the passenger platform past the huddling shifting groups of travelers by the monotonous trains She hurried down a narrow catwalk, through a maze of rail, past blinded signals and frozen switches, with nothing but the beat of her

tunnels of 7  
planks under . . .  
echo—she heard  
in the darkness like a crown without a body, the crown of a depositor ruler above a realm of empty tracks

The tower director was too expert a man at too exacting a job to be able wholly to conceal the dangerous burden of intelligence he understood what she wanted him to do from her first few words and answered only with an abrupt "Yes, ma'am," but he was bent over his charts by the time the others



to where there were no interlocking systems, no semaphores, electricity—back to the time when train signals were not steel wire, but men holding lanterns. Physical men, serving the lamps. You've advocated it long enough—you got what you wanted. (You thought that your tools would determine your ideas? But happens to be the other way around—and now you're going to the kind of tools your ideas have determined!)

But even to go back took an act of intelligence—she thought, feeling the paradox of her own position, as she looked at the leathery faces around her.

"How will we work the switches, Miss Taggart?"

"By hand."

"And the signals?"

"By hand."

"How?"

"By hand."

"By written orders."

"Uh?"

"By written orders—just as in the old days." She pointed to the tower director. "He's working out a schedule of how to move the trains and which tracks to use. He'll write out an order for the signal and switch, he'll pick some men as runners and they'll be delivering the orders to every post—and it will take hours to what used to take minutes, but we'll get those waiting trains to the Terminal and out on the road."

"We're to work it that way all night?"

"And all day tomorrow—until the engineer who's got the brain for it, shows you how to repair the interlocker."

"There's nothing in the union contracts about men standing with lanterns. There's going to be trouble. The union will object."

"Let them come to me."

"The Unification Board will object."

"I'll be responsible."

"Well, I wouldn't want to be held for giving the orders—"

"I'll give the orders."

She stepped out on the landing of the iron stairway that hugged the side of the tower.

stab of burning humiliation that she should now see it brought down to the level where human lampposts would stand in tunnels as its last memorial statues.

She could barely distinguish the darkness and stood without moving on the walls behind them and

men when they  
ing silently thro  
sh mark, with  
t falling on



she went on speaking as if carrying out a hypnotic order given herself some endless time ago, knowing only that the compulsion of that order was a form of defiance against him, neither known nor hearing her own words.

She felt as if she were standing in a radiant silence where sight was her only capacity and his face was its only object, and the sight of his face was like a speech in the form of a pressure at the base of her throat. It seemed so natural that he should be here, it seemed so unendurably simple—she felt as if the shock were not his presence but the presence of others on the tracks of her railroad, where he belonged and they did not. She was seeing those moments aboard the train when, at its plunge into the tunnels, she had felt a sudden solemn tension, as if this place were showing her in naked simplicity the essence of her railroad and of her life, the union of consciousness and matter, the frozen form of a mind's ingenious giving physical existence to its purpose, she had felt a sense of sudden hope, as if this place held the meaning of all of her values, and a sense of secret excitement, as if a nameless promise were awaiting her under the ground—it was right that she should now meet him here, he had been the meaning and the promise—she was not seeing his clothing any longer, nor to what level her railroad had reduced him—she was seeing only the vanishing torture of the months when he had been outside her reach—she was seeing in his face the confession of what those months had cost him—the only speech she heard was as if she were saying to him: This is the reward for all my days—and as if he were answering: For all of mine.

She knew that she had finished speaking to the strangers who she saw that the tower carried something to them, glared a sense of irresistible compulsion. . . . stairs, slipping away from the exit, but into the darkness. . . . follow me, she thought—and felt as if the thought were in words, but in the tension of her muscles, the tension of her will to accomplish a thing she knew to be outside her power, yet she knew with certainty that it would be accomplished and by her wish. . . . no, she thought, not by her wish, but by its total rightness. You will follow me—it was neither plea nor prayer nor demand, but the quiet statement of a fact, it contained the whole of her power of knowledge and the whole of the knowledge she had earned through the years. You will follow me, if we are what we are, you and I, if we live, if the world exists, if you know the meaning of this moment and can't let it slip by, as others let it slip, into the senselessness of the unwilling and unreach. You will follow me—she felt an exultant assurance, which was neither hope nor faith, but an act of worship for the logic of existence.

She was hurrying down the remnants of abandoned rails, down the long, dark corridors twisting through granite. She lost the sound of the director's voice behind her. Then she felt the beat of her arteries and heard, in answering rhythm, the beat of the city above her head, but she felt as if she heard the motion of her blood as a

and filling the silence and the vastness of the night.

THEY WERE BOTH DEAD WITH THE EARTH AND THE SKY

He saw to the next blue light that swept across the line of his eyes, the eyes that remained held level, directed ahead—and she felt certain that she had stayed in his sight from the moment he had seen her at the tower.

She heard the beat of the city above them—these tunnels, she had once thought, were the roots of the city and of all the motion reaching to the sky—but they, she thought, John Galt and she, were the living power within these roots, they were the start and aim and meaning—he, too, she thought, heard the beat of the city as the beat of his body.

She threw her cape back, she stood defiantly straight, as he had seen her stand on the steps of the tower—as he had seen her for the last time, ten years ago, here, under the ground—she was hearing his words of his confession, not as words, but by means of that beating which made it so difficult to breathe. You looked like a symbol of luxury and you belonged in the place that was its source. You seemed to bring the enjoyment of life back to its rightful owners. You had a look of energy and of its reward, together and I was the first man who had ever stated in what manner these two were inseparable.

The next span of moments was like flashes of light in stretches of blinded unconsciousness—the moment when she saw his face, as he stopped beside her, when she saw the unastonished calm the flashed intensity, the laughter of understanding in the dark green eyes—the moment when she knew what he saw in her face, by the light, drawn harshness of his lips—the moment when she felt his mouth on hers, when she felt the shape of his mouth both as an absolute shape and as a liquid filling her body—then the motion of his lips down the line of her throat a drinking motion that left a trail of bruises—then the sparkle of her diamond clip against the gleaming copper of his hair.

Then she was conscious of nothing but the sensations of her body, because her body acquired the sudden power to let her know her most complete self as by direct perception. Just as her eyes had



pressure of a hand that made her tremble, but the instantaneous  
of its meaning, the knowledge that it was *his* hand, that it moved  
as if her flesh were his.

... of everything that was his person and  
life—from the night of the mass meeting in a factory in Wisconsin  
to the Atlantis of a valley hidden in the Rocky Mountains, to the  
triumphant mockery of the green eyes of the superlative intel-  
ligence above a worker's figure at the foot of the tower—it contained  
her whole life.

had chosen  
now gave  
the sum  
knew  
breasts.

... the wife of her came and she felt the first of  
by means of the  
for her triumph  
tool for her awa-  
limit of her capa-  
patient demand,  
it had the same  
same inexhaustible

... of greed  
He pulled her head back for a moment, to look straight into  
eyes, to let her see his, to let her know the full meaning of the  
actions, as if throwing the spotlight of consciousness upon them;  
the meeting of their eyes in a moment of intimacy greater than  
one to come.

Then she felt the mesh of burlap striking the skin of her shoulder;  
she found herself lying on the broken sandbags, she saw the  
tight gleam of her stockings, she felt his mouth pressed to her and  
then rising in a tortured motion up the line of her leg as if

... she knew only as an upward sexual  
motion that released and unstayed her body into a single shock  
of pleasure—then she knew nothing but the motion of his body;  
the driving greed that went reaching on and on, as if she were  
not a person any longer, only a sensation of endless reaching for  
the impossible—then she knew that it was not his hand that  
lay still, knowing.

He lay beside  
granite vault  
of sandbags as  
wedge of her  
beads of moisture  
into invisible  
spoke, his voice  
... as if he were quietly continuing a sentence  
answer to the questions in her mind, as if he had nothing to tell

on her any longer and what he owed her now was only the act of  
dressing his soul — simply as he would have undressed his body

"this — how I've watched you for ten years — from here,  
on under the ground under your feet — knowing every move  
made in your office at the top of the building but never seeing  
you, never enough — ten years of nights, spent waiting to catch a  
glimpse of you, here — on the platforms when you boarded a train.

Whenever the order came down to couple your car I'd know of  
and wait and see you come down the ramp and wish you didn't  
walk so fast — it was so much like you that walk, I'd know it  
anywhere — your walk and those legs of yours — it was always

— — — — — I'm  
— — — — — hunk  
— — — — — not  
— — — — — you

— — — — — when I turned back to my work — when I went  
out just before sunrise for the three hours of sleep which I didn't

"I love you," she said, her voice quiet and almost toneless except  
for a fragile sound of youth.

He closed his eyes as if letting the sound travel through the years  
around them. "Ten years Dagny — except that once there were  
few weeks when I had you before me in plain sight within reach,  
hurrying away but held still as on a lighted stage a private  
age for me to watch — and I watched you for hours through  
my evenings — in the lighted window of an office that was  
called the John Galt Line. And one night—"

Her breath was a faint gasp "Was it you that night?"

"Did you see me?"

"I saw your shadow — on the pavement — pacing back and  
forth — it looked like a struggle — it looked like—" She  
stopped — she didn't want to say "torture."

"It was" he said quietly "That night I wanted to walk — to  
see you, to speak to — That was the night I came closest to  
taking my oath when I saw you slumped across your desk when  
saw you broken by the burden you were carrying—"

"John that night it was you that I was thinking of — only I  
didn't know it"

"But, you see I knew it."

"It was you, all my life through everything I did and every  
thing I wanted"

"I know it."

"John the hardest was not when I left you in the valley —"

"Your radio speech, the day you returned?"

"Yes! Were you listening?"

"Oh — — — — — a magnificent thing to do

and you expected

"No "

"Was it ?" she stopped

"Hard? Yes But only for the first few days That next night .  
Do you want me to tell you what I did the night after I learned it  
"Yes "

"I had never seen Hank Rearden, only pictures of him in the  
newspapers I knew that he was in New York, that night, at a  
conference of big industrialists I wanted to have just one look at  
him I went to wait at the entrance of the hotel where that conference  
was held There were bright lights under the marquee of the entrance,  
but it was dark beyond, on the pavement, so I could wait  
without being seen there were a few loafers and vagrants hanging  
around there was a drizzle of rain and we clung to the walls of the  
hotel

be for that moment There were chauffeurs driving up their cars  
there were a few reporters delaying them for questions and hanging  
on trying to catch a word from them They were worn men, the  
industrialists aging flabby, frantic with the effort to disguise their  
certainty And then I saw him He wore an expensive trenchcoat and  
a hat slanting across his eyes He walked with the kind of

impatient and a little amused And then, for one instant, I saw  
I had never done before what most men wreck their lives on doing  
—I saw that moment out of context, I saw the world as he made  
it look, as if it matched him as if he were its symbol—I saw  
world of achievement of unenslaved energy, of unobstructed drive  
through purposeful years to the enjoyment of one's reward—I saw  
as I stood in the

all of its actual meaning—I saw what price he was paying for his  
brilliant ability what torture he was enduring in silent bewilderment  
struggling to understand what I had understood—I saw that the  
world he suggested did not exist and was yet to be made I saw him  
again for what he was the symbol of my battle, the unrewarded hero  
whom I was to avenge and to release—and then . . . then I ac-  
cepted what I had learned about you and him I saw that it changed  
nothing that I should have expected it—that it was right "

He heard the faint sound of her moan and he chuckled softly  
"Dagny, it's not that I don't suffer, it's that I know the unimportance  
of suffering I know that pain is to be fought and thrown  
off, not to be accepted as part of one's soul and

it across one's view of existence. Don't feel sorry for me. It was  
right then."

She turned back to him. . . . he smiled, lifted  
she lay help-  
r, here—here!

"Ever since—"

"Ever since I quit the Twentieth Century"

"The night when you saw me for the first time . . . you were  
asking here, then?"

"Yes. And the morning when you offered to work for me as my  
st, I was only your track laborer on leave of absence. Do you  
why I laughed at I did?"

She was looking up at his face; hers was a smile of pain, his—of  
re gaily "John . . ."

"Say it. But say it all."

"You were here . . . all those years . . ."

"Yes"

" . . . all those years . . . while the railroad was perishing . . .  
while I was searching for men of intelligence while I was  
ugging to hold onto any scrap of it I could find

" . . . while you were combing the country for the inventor of my  
stor, while you were feeding James Taggart and Wesley Mouch,  
while you were naming your best achievement after the enemy  
som vnn . . ."

. . . inside  
 . . . long-  
 . . . me,  
 . . . g an  
 . . . vent

ht

un

2

it

luz

. . . have to look. I was here I was waiting for you I love you,  
 . . . I love you more than my life I who have taught men how  
 . . . is to be . . . the unpaid  
 . . . that I

2

"

by, it was ours, my love, we had earned it but you're . . .  
quit and join me—you don't have to tell me I know—and since I  
ose to take what I wanted before it was fully mine, I'll have to

pay for it, I have no -  
if I give in to an en  
answer to the look o  
in mind—and *that* is  
in the course you re

My actual enemies & I am no danger to me *you* are *you* are  
only one who can lead them to find me They would never have  
capacity to know what I am, but with your help—they will”

No!

“No not by your intention And you’re free to change your con  
but so long as you follow it, you’re not free to escape its lo  
Don’t frown the choice was mine and it’s a danger I chose to ac  
I am a trader Dagny, in all things I wanted you, I had no po  
to change your decision I had only the power to consider the p  
and decide whether I could afford it I could My life is mine  
spend or to invest—and you you’re —as if his gesture were c  
tinuing his sentence he raised her across his arm and kis  
her mouth while her body hung lumpily in surrender her  
streaming down her head”

his lips—”

wanted yo

not my mi

There was a sudden glint of hardness in his eyes he sat up  
smiled and asked Would you want me to join you and go  
work? Would you like me to repair that interlocking signal syst  
of yours within an hour?

“No!” The cry was immediate—in answer to the flash of a s  
den image the image of the men in the private dining room of  
Wayne Falkland

He laughed Why not?”

“I’d —”

in stand

you fear

Not yet,” he said quietly

He got up and she rose obediently, unable to speak

“I will remain here —”

“Don’t seek to approach me Don’t seek  
here Don’t come to my home Don’t ever let them see us togeth  
And when —”

She inclined her head in silent promise

But when he turned to go a sudden shudder ran through her bo  
like a first jolt of awakening or a last convulsion of life and  
led in an involuntary cry “Where are you going?”

"To be a lamppost and stand holding a lantern till dawn—which the only work your world relegates me to and the only work it's ag to get."

She seized his arm to hold him to follow to follow him blindly, andoning everything but the sight of his face "John!

He gripped her wrist, twisted her hand and threw it off "No" he d

Then he took her hand and raised it to his lips and the pressure his mouth was more passionate a statement than any he had osen to confess. Then he walked away down the vanishing line rail, and it seemed to her that both the rail and the figure were andoning her at the same time

When she staggered out into the concourse of the Terminal the st blast of rolling wheels went shuddering through the walls of a building like the sudden beat of a heart that had stopped The mple of Nathaniel Taggart was silent and empty its changeless ght beating down on a deserted stretch of marble Some shabby pures shuffled across it as if lost in its shining expanse On the steps of the pedestal under the statue of the austere exultant figure a aged bum sat slumped in passive resignation like a wing plucked and with no place to go resting on any chance cornice

She fell down on the steps of the pedestal like another derelict a dust smeared cape wrapped tightly about her she sat still her ad on her arm past crying or feeling or moving

It seemed to her only that she kept seeing a figure with a raised arm holding a light and it looked at times like the Statue of Liberty and then it looked like a man with sun-streaked hair holding a lantern against a midnight sky a red lantern that stopped the movement of the world

"Don't take it to heart lady whatever it is said the bum in a tone of exhausted compassion "Nothings to be done about it any way What's the use lady? Who is John Galt?"

## Chapter VI THE CONCERTO OF DELIVERANCE

In October 20 the steel workers union of Rearden Steel demanded a raise in wages

Hank Rearden learned it from the newspapers no demand had been presented to him and it had not been considered necessary to inform him The demand was made to the Unification Board it was not explained why no other steel company was presented with a similar claim He was unable to tell whether the demanders did or did not represent his workers the Board's rules on union elec he Board had

the union's petition, refusing to grant the raise if any had been held on the matter, Rearden had not known about it. He had not been

sulted informed or notified. He had waited, volunteering no questions.

On October 25 the newspapers of the country, controlled by the same men who controlled the Board, began a campaign of con-

quest for food—next to a story about a champagne bottle used over somebody's head at a drunken party given by an unnamed steel tycoon at a fashionable hotel, the steel tycoon had been Orrin Boyle but the story mentioned no names. Inequalities still exist among us the newspapers were saying and cheat us of the benefits of our enlightened age. Privations have worn the nerves and temper of the people. The situation is reaching the danger point. We fear an outbreak of violence. We fear an outbreak of violence the newspapers kept repeating.

On October 28 a group of the new workers at Rearden Metal attacked a foreman and knocked the tuyères off a blast furnace. Two days later a similar attack was made on the administration building, a crane upsetting a ladle of molten metal. "Standers. Guess I went nuts worrying about my hungry kids," he said when arrested. "This is no time to theorize about who's right or wrong," the newspapers commented. "Our sole concern is the fact that an inflammatory situation is endangering the steel output of the country."

Rearden watched asking no questions. He waited, as if some final knowledge were in the process of unraveling before him, a process not to be hastened or stopped. No—he thought through the early dusk of autumn evenings looking out the window of his office—no, he was not indifferent to his mills but the feeling which had once been passion for a living entity was now like the wistful tenderness one feels for the memory of the loved and dead. The special quality of what one feels for the dead, he thought, is that no action is possible any longer.

On the morning of October 31 he received a notice informing him that his mills were to be closed down.

with every requirement of the law—except that no such demand

static than the rest?" "Hank do you want me to do nothing? To let it lying down?" "No standing up And I mean *standing* out move Don't act." "But they've left you helpless" Have they?" he asked softly smiling

He had a few hundred dollars in cash left in his wallet, nothing more. But the odd, glowing warmth in his mind like the feel of a instant handshake was the thought that in a secret safe of his bedroom there lay a bar of solid gold given to him by a gold haired mate.

Next day on November 1, he received a telephone call from Washington, from a bureaucrat whose voice seemed to come sliding down the wire on its knees in protestations of apology. A mistake Mr Rearden! It was nothing but an unfortunate mistake! That attachment was a

"I know how it is nowadays with the amount of red tape I mixed the records and so—when it wasn't your fault at all it was in fact, the case of a soap manufacturer! Please accept our apologies Mr Rearden our deepest personal apologies at the top level." The voice slid to a slight, expectant pause "Mr Rearden?" "I'm listening I can't tell you how sorry we are to have caused you any embarrassment or inconvenience And with all those damn formalities that we have to go through—you know how it is red tape!—it will take a few days perhaps a week to de-process that order and to lift the attachment Mr Rearden?" "I heard you" "We're desperately sorry and ready to make any amends within our power You will of course be entitled to claim damages for any inconvenience this might cause you and we are prepared to pay We won't contest it. You will of course file such a claim and—" "I have not said that" "Uh? No you haven't said that" well what have you said Mr Rearden? "I have said nothing."

Late on the next afternoon another voice came pleading from Washington This one did not seem to slide but to bounce on the telephone wire with the gay virtuosity of a tight rope walker. It introduced itself as Tinky Holloway and pleaded that Rearden attend a conference "an informal little conference just a few of us the top level few" to be held in New York at the Wayne Falkland Hotel day after next.

"There have been so many misunderstandings in the past few weeks!" said Tinky Holloway Such unfortunate misunderstandings—and so unnecessary! We could straighten everything out in a jiffy Mr Rearden if we had a chance to have a little talk with you We're extremely anxious to see you

"You can issue a subpoena for me any time you wish" "Oh no! no! no! The voice sounded frightened. "No Mr Rearden—why think of such things? You don't understand us we're anxious to meet you on a friendly basis, we're seeking nothing but your voluntary co-operation." Holloway paused tensely wondering whether he had heard the faint sound of a distant creak wanted but heard nothing else "Mr Rearden?"



"Yes?"

Surely Mr Rearden at a time like this, a conference with us could be to your great advantage"

"A conference—about what?"

"You've encountered so many difficulties—and we're anxious to help you in any way we can"

"I have not asked for help"

These are precarious times Mr Rearden the public mood is uncertain and inflammatory so dangerous . and we wish to be able to protect you

"I have not asked for protection"

But surely you realize that were in a position to be of value to you and if there's anything you want from us any

"There isn't"

"But you must have problems you'd like to discuss with us"

"I haven't"

"Then well then—giving up the attempt at the play of granting a favor Holloway switched to an open plea—"then won't you just give us a hearing?"

"If you have anything to say to me"

"We have Mr Rearden we certainly have! That's all we're asking for—a hearing Just give us a chance Just come to the conference You wouldn't be committing yourself to anything—" I said it involuntarily and stopped hearing a bright mocking stab of life in Rearden's voice an unpromising sound, as Rearden answered

"I know it"

"Well I mean that is well then will you come?"

All right said Rearden I'll come"

He did not listen to Holloway's assurances of gratitude he noted only that Holloway kept repeating "At seven P.M., November fourth Mr Rearden November fourth" as if the date had some special significance

Rearden dropped the receiver and lay back in his chair looked at the glow of furnace flames on the ceiling of his office. He knew that the conference was a trap he knew also that he was walking into it with nothing for any trappers to gain

Tinky Holloway dropped the receiver in his Washington office and sat up tensely frowning Claude Slagenhop president of Friends of Global Progress who had sat in an armchair nervously chewing a matchstick glanced up at him and asked "Not so good?"

Holloway shook his head "He'll come but no not so good" He added "I don't think he'll take it."

"That's what my punk told me"

"I know"

"The punk said we'd better not try it"

"God damn your punk! We've got to! We'll have to risk it"

The punk was Philip Rearden who weeks ago had reported to Claude Slagenhop "No he won't let me in he won't give me a job I've tried as you wanted me to I've tried my best but it's no use he won't let me set foot inside his mills And as to his friends



"No! No, not tomorrow. It's got to be today. It's got to be today." The  
was a dim tone of panic in her voice, but it was the stale panic  
chronic helplessness, not the sound of an emergency—except for  
odd echo of fear in her mechanical insistence.

What is it, Mother?"

"I can't talk about it over the telephone. I've got to see you."

"Then if you wish to come to the office—"

No! Not at the office! I've got to see you alone, where we  
talk. Can't you come here today, as a favor? It's your mother who  
asking you a favor. You've never come to see us at all. And may  
you're not the one to blame for it, either. But can't you do it  
me this once, if I beg you to?"

"All right, Mother. I'll be there at four o'clock this afternoon."

"That will be fine, Henry. Thank you, Henry. That will be fine."

It seemed to him that there was a touch of tension in the air  
the mills, that day. It was a touch too slight to define—but  
mills, to him, were like the face of a loved wife where he could  
catch shades of feeling almost ahead of expression. He noted  
small clusters of the new workers, just three or four of the  
buddling together in conversation—once or twice too often.  
noticed their manner, a manner suggesting a poolroom corner,  
a factory. He noticed  
glances a shade too  
not quite enough to

weight of unconfessed unhappiness, the stern endurance that told  
him to confess it, the desperate innocence of the effort to under-  
stand his family—the effort to be just.

He walked slowly up the path toward the door. He felt no ex-  
tension, only the sense of a great, solemn clarity. He knew that  
house was a monument of guilt—of his guilt toward himself.

He had expected to see his mother and Philip, he had not ex-  
pected the third person who rose, as they did, at his entrance into  
the living room—it was Lillian.

He stopped on the threshold. They stood looking at his face and  
and at the open door behind him. Their faces had a look of fear  
and cunning, the look of that blackmail through virtue which he  
had learned to understand, as if they hoped to get away with it by  
means of nothing but his pity, to hold him trapped, when a single  
step back could take him out of their reach.

They had counted on his pity and dreaded his anger, they had not  
dared consider the third alternative—his indifference.

"What is she doing here?" he asked, turning to his mother, his  
voice dispassionately flat.

"Lillian's been living here ever since your divorce," she  
defensively. "I couldn't let her starve on the city



'You won't?' She choked on a small gasp "Why?"

"I will not assume obligations that I can't fulfill"

'What do you mean?"

"I will not assume debts I have no way of repaying"

"What do you mean, no way? That attachment is only sort of technicality, it's only temporary, everybody knows that!"

"Do they? I don't"

"But, Henry—a grocery bill! You're not sure you'll be able to pay a grocery bill, *you*, with all the millions you own?"

"I'm not going to defraud the grocer by pretending that I own those millions"

'What are you talking about? Who owns them?"

"Nobody"

"What do you mean?"

"Mother I think you understand me fully I think you understood it before I did There isn't any ownership left in existence of any property It's what you've approved of and believed in for years You wanted me tied I'm tied Now it's too late to play games about it"

"Are you going to let some political ideas of yours—" She saw the look on his face and stooped abruptly

Lillian sat looking down at the floor, as if afraid to glance at this moment Philip sat cracking his knuckles

His mother dragged her eyes into focus again and whispered "Don't abandon us, Henry" Some faint stab of life in her voice told him that the lid of her real purpose was cracking open "The times are terrible times, and we're scared That's the truth of it, Henry we're scared, because you're turning away from us Oh, I don't mean just that grocery bill but that's a sign—a year ago you would have let that happen to us Now . . . now you don't care." She made an expectant pause "Do you?"

"No"

"Well . . . well, I guess the blame is ours That's what I want to tell you—that we know we're to blame We haven't treated you right, all these years We've been unfair to you, we've made you suffer, we've used you and given you no thanks in return. We're guilty, Henry, we've sinned against you, and we confess it What more can we say to you now? Will you find it in your heart to forgive us?"

"What is it you want me to do?" he asked, in the clear, flat tone of a business conference

"I don't know! Who am I to know? But that's not what I'm talking about It's your feeling that counts—even if we don't feel it. Will you cancel the past?"

The look of terror in her eyes was real A year ago he would have told himself that this was her way of making amends, he would have choked his revulsion against her words, words which conveyed nothing to him but the fog of the meaningless; he would have violated his mind to give them meaning, even if he did not

understand, he would have ascribed to her the virtue of sincerity in her own terms even if they were not his. But he was through with granting respect to any terms other than his own.

"Will you forgive us?"

"Mother, it would be best not to speak of that. Don't press me to tell you why. I think you know it as well as I do. If there's anything you want done, tell me what it is. There's nothing else to discuss."

"But I *don't* understand you! I *don't*! That's what I called you re for—to ask your forgiveness! Are you going to refuse to answer me?"

"Very well. What would it mean, my forgiveness?"

"Uh?"

"I said what would it mean?"

She came a step

forward.

" "

" "

"Do you wish me to pretend that the past has not existed?"

"Oh God, Henry, can't you see? All we want is only to know if you . . . that you feel some concern for us."

"I don't feel it. Do you wish me to fake it?"

"But that's what I'm begging you for—to *feel* it!"

"On what ground?"

"Ground?"

"In exchange for what?"

"Henry, Henry, it's not business we're talking about—not steel angles and bank balances, it's *feelings*—and you talk like a miser!"

"I am one."

What he saw in her eyes was terror—not the helpless terror of rugging and failing to understand—but the terror of being pushed toward the edge where to avoid understanding would no longer be visible.

"Look, Henry," said Philip hastily. "Mother can't understand these things. We don't know how to approach you. We can't speak our language."

"I don't speak yours."

"What she's trying to say is that we're sorry. We're terribly sorry that we've hurt you. You think we're not paying for it, but we are. We're suffering remorse."

The pain in Philip's face was real. A year ago Rearden would have felt pity. Now, he knew that they had held him through nothing but his reluctance to hurt them *his fear of their pain*. He was not afraid of it any longer.

"We're sorry, Henry. We know we've harmed you. We wish we could atone for it. But what can we do? The past is past. We can't undo it."

"Neither can I."

"You can accept our repentance," said Lillian in a voice with caution. "I have nothing to gain from you now. I only

you ~~in~~ know that whatever I've done I've done it because I love you

He turned away without answering

"Henry!" cried his mother "What's happened to you? What changed you like that? You don't seem to be human any more! You keep pressing us for answers when we haven't any answers to give! You keep beating us with logic—what's logic at a time like this—what's logic when people are suffering?"

"We can't help it!" cried Philip

"We're at your mercy," said Lillian.

They were throwing their pleas at a face that could not be reached. They did not know—and their panic was the last of the struggle to escape the knowledge—that his merciless sense of justice which had been their only hold on him which had made him take any punishment and give them the benefit of every doubt was now turned against them—that the same force that had made him tolerant, was now the force that made him ruthless—that the justice which would forgive miles of innocent errors of knowledge would not forgive a single step taken in conscious evil.

"Henry, don't you understand us?" his mother was pleading

"I do," he said quietly

She looked away, avoiding the clarity of his eyes. "Don't you care what becomes of us?"

"I don't."

"Aren't you human?" Her voice grew shrill with anger. "Aren't you capable of any love at all? It's your heart I'm trying to reach, not your mind! Love is not something to argue and reason and bargain about! It's something to give! To feel! Oh God, Henry, can't you feel without thinking?"

"I never have."

In a moment her voice came back low and droning. "We're not as smart as you are, not as strong. If we've sinned and blundered it's because we're helpless. We need you, you're all we've got—and we're losing you—and we're afraid. These are terrible times and getting worse, people are scared to death, scared and blind and not knowing what to do. How are we to cope with it, if you leave us? We're small and weak and we'll be swept like driftwood in that terror that's running loose in the world. Maybe we had our share of guilt for it, maybe we helped to bring it about, not knowing any better, but what's done is done—and we can't stop it now. If you abandon us, we're lost. If you give up and vanish like all those men who—"

It was not a sound that stopped her, it was only a movement of his eyebrows, the brief, swift movement of a check mark. Then they saw him smile, the nature of the smile was the most terrifying of answers.

"—"

"—"

qu can't  
You

with deserter, because now they take it out on your family!

they'll leave us penniless, they'll seize everything, they'll leave us starve, they'll—"

"Keep still!" cried Lillian, more adept than the others at reading danger signs in Rearden's face

His face held the remnant of a smile, and they knew that he was not seeing them any longer, but it was not in their power to know why his smile now seemed to hold pain and an almost wistful gaze, or why he was looking across the room, at the niche of the farthest window.

He was seeing a finely sculptured face held composed under the sting of his insults, he was hearing a voice that had said to him

for pleas for mercy, the logic of those feelings they so righteously exclaimed as non logical—there was the simple brutal essence of men who speak of being able to feel without thought and of using mercy over justice

They had known what to fear; they had grasped and named, for he had, the only way of deliverance left open to him, they understood the hopelessness of his industrial position, the

your the last of him in the name of mercy forgiveness and

I very quietly,  
o name what  
ing with your  
and, as your  
unmelation"

Logic!" she screamed "There you go again with your damn pity! It's pity that we need, pity not logic!"

He rose to his feet

"Wait! Don't go! Henry, don't abandon us! Don't sentence us to death! Whatever we are we're human! We want to live!"

perish! Whatever we are we're human! We want to live!"

do if

y into

expression intended as a smile of amusement yet holding nothing but fear and malice "You won't be able to quit and run away,"

and Philip "You can't run away without money"

It seemed to strike its goal, Rearden stopped short, then chuckled

"Thanks Philip," he said

"Uh?" Philip gave a nervous jerk of bewilderment

"So that's the purpose of the attachment order That's what



friends are afraid of I knew they were getting set to spring something on me today I didn't know that the attachment was the idea of cutting off escape." He turned incredulously to look at mother. And that's why you had to see me today, before the conference in New York."

"Mother didn't know it!" cried Philip, then caught himself and cried louder. "I don't know what you're talking about! I have said anything! I haven't said it!" His feat now seemed to him some much less mystic and much more practical quality.

"Don't worry you poor little louse, I won't tell them that you told me anything. And if you were trying—"

He did not finish, he looked at the three faces before him and sudden smile ended his sentence, a smile of weariness, of pity, incredulous revulsion. He was seeing the final contradiction, grotesque absurdity at the end of the irrationalists' game. The man in Washington had hoped to hold him by prompting *these* three to try for the role of hostages.

"You think you're so good, don't you?" It was a sudden cry and it came from Lillian. She had leaped to her feet to bar his exit, her face was,

when she

You're so

She looks

game was

completing a circuit and in sudden clarity he knew what her game had been and why she had married him.

If to choose a person as the constant center of one's concern as the focus of one's view of life was to love—he thought—then was true that she loved him but if, to him, love was a celebration of one's self and of existence—then to the self-haters and self-haters, the pursuit of destruction was the only form and equivalent of love. It was for

him for his siren

as one chooses:

as one chooses:

the man  
vermen  
ndist

those pretentious ashes who called themselves an intellectual elite the burned-out remnants of undigested culture feeding on the afterglow of the minds of others offering their denial of the mind as their only claim to distinction, and a craving to control the world as their only lust—she the woman hanger-on of that elite wearing their shopworn sneer as her answer to the universe, holding up potency as superiority and emptiness as virtue—he unaware of their hatred innocently scornful of their posturing fraud—she, seeing him as the danger to their world, as a threat, as a challenge, as reproach.

The lust that drives others to enslave an empire, he her limits a passion for power over him. She had seen him, as if, unable to equal his value, she could sur-

ying it, as if the measure of his greatness would thus become  
measure of hers, as if—he thought with a shudder—as if the

remembered her hammering derision of his work, his mis-  
Moral, his success, he remembered her desire to see him drunk,  
a once, her attempts to push him into infidelity, her pleasure at  
thought that he had fallen to the level of some sordid romance,  
terror on discovering that that romance had been an attainment,  
a degradation. Her line of attack, which he had found so  
thing had been constant and clear—it was his self-esteem she had  
his value  
she had  
d wanted  
collapse,

the same purpose and motive, for the same satisfaction, as  
have complex systems of philosophy to destroy generations,  
establish dictatorships to destroy a country so she possessing no  
apons except femininity, had made it her goal to destroy one

Yours was the code of life—he remembered the voice of his  
a young teacher—what, then, is theirs?  
"I have something to tell you!" cried Lillian, with the sound of  
an impotent rage which wishes that words were brass knuckles

has been laid by another man! I've been unfaithful to you  
ar me? I've been unfaithful, not with some great noble lover but  
in the scummiest louse, with Jim Taggart! Three months ago! Be-  
re your divorce! While I was your wife! While I was still your  
de!"

He stood listening like a scientist studying a subject of no per-  
mal  
th

the mercy of the action of another  
"I've been unfaithful to you! Don't you hear me, you stainless  
woman? I've slept with Jim Taggart you incorruptible hero! Don't  
ou hear me? Don't you hear me? Don't you  
He was looking at her as he would have looked if a stranger  
the street with a personal confes-



s of drinks and the comments on the national emergency, "what  
you want?"

"You have . . . . .," said Tinky Holloway,  
conversation with a view

ur outstanding ability,"  
Lawson, "and your expert advice on the country's industrial  
lems"

is men like you that we need in Washington" said Dr Ferris  
re's no reason why you should have remained an outsider for  
ong, when your voice is needed at the top level of national  
ship."

he sickening thing about it, thought Rearden was that the  
ches were only half lies, the other half, in their tone of hysteri  
urgency, was the unstated wish to have it somehow be true  
at did you want?" he asked

Why . . . to listen to you, Mr Rearden," said Wesley Mouch  
erk of his features imitating a frightened smile the smile was  
d, the fear was real. "We . . . we want the benefit of your  
ion on the nation's industrial crisis"

have nothing to say"  
But, Mr Rearden," said Dr Ferris, "all we want is a chance to  
perate with you"

I've told you once, publicly, that I don't co-operate at the point  
gun."

Can't we bury the hatchet at a time like this?" said Lawson be  
hingly

the gun? Go ahead."

Oh?"

It's you who're holding it. Bury it, if you think you can"

That . . . that was just a figure of speech, Lawson explained,  
king "I was speaking metaphorically"

I wasn't."

Can't we all stand together for the sake of the country in this  
of emergency?" said Dr Ferris "Can't we disregard our dif  
fereces of opinion? We're willing to meet you halfway If there's  
aspect of our policy which you oppose just tell us and we'll  
e a directive to—"

But it, boys I didn't come here to help you pretend that I'm not  
in my position I'm in and that any halfway is possible between us  
I come to the point. You've prepared some new gimmuck to  
ing on the steel industry What is it?

As a matter of fact," said Mouch "we do have a vital question  
to discuss in regard to the steel industry but . . . but your lan  
guage, Mr Rearden!"

We don't want to spring anything on you," said Holloway "We  
ed you here to discuss it with you"

I came here to take orders Give them"

But, Mr Rearden, we don't want to look at it that . . .  
I want to give you orders We want your voluntary c

Rearden . . . . . it"



es for the sake of the country. The mood of labor in the steel  
stry is extremely tense at present, Mr. Rearden, it is danger-  
y explosive and . . . and in order to protect you from . . .  
... " He stopped.

(es?" said Rearden. "From?"

From possible . . . violence, certain measures are necessary,  
h . . . Look, Jim"—he turned suddenly to James Taggart—  
y don't you explain it to Mr. Rearden, as a fellow indus-  
str?"

Well, somebody's got to support the railroads," said Taggart  
nly, not looking at him. "The country needs railroads and  
body's got to help us carry the load, and if we don't get an  
ase in freight rates—"

to, no, no!" snapped Wesley Mouch. "Tell Mr. Rearden about  
working of the Railroad Unification Plan."

Well, the Plan is a full success," said Taggart lethargically, "ex-  
for the not fully controllable element of time. It is only a  
tion of time before our unified teamwork puts every railroad  
e common to all."

What? . . .  
The Railroad Unification Plan to do with me?"

but, Mr. Rearden," cried Mouch with desperate cheerfulness,  
is the pattern we're to follow! *That's* what we called you here  
about!"

What?"

The Steel Unification Plan!"

There was an instant of silence, as of breaths drawn after a plunge.  
Rearden sat looking at them with a glance that seemed to be a  
ce of interest.

"In view of the critical plight of the steel industry," said Mouch  
a sudden rush, as if not to give himself time to know what  
him uneasy about the nature of Rearden's glance, "and since  
is the most vitally, crucially basic commodity, the foundation  
of entire industrial structure, drastic measures must be taken  
to reserve the country's steel making facilities, equipment and  
!" The tone and impetus of public speaking carried him that far  
so far. "With this objective in view, our Plan is . . . our  
is . . ."

"Our Plan is really very simple," said Tinky Holloway, striving to  
it by the gaily bouncing simplicity of his voice. "We'll lift  
restrictions from the production of steel and every company  
produce all it can, according to its ability. But to avoid the  
and danger of dog-eat-dog competition, all the companies  
be known as the Steel Industry, and all their production will be  
known as the Steel Industry's production."

At the  
stating  
open-  
h will



but Lawson's avid pleasure at the familiar formula of self un-  
lation, vanished abruptly at the sound of Rearden's voice, a cold,  
fer's voice answering "I do."

"It's not Boyle alone who's involved," said Holloway pleadingly  
re country's economy would not be able to stand a major dis-  
sion at the present moment. There are thousands of Boyle's work-  
suppliers and customers. What would happen to them if As-  
sociated Steel—

and

richest, safest and strongest industrialist in the country at this  
ment."

"What about the moment after next?"

"Uh?"

"How long do you expect me to be able to produce in a loss?"

"Oh Mr Rearden, I have complete faith in you!"

"To hell with your faith! How do you expect me to do it?"

"You'll manage!"

"How?"

"There was no answer

"We can't theorize about the future," cried Wesley Mouch, "when  
re: in immediate national collapse to avoid! We've got to save  
our—"

Rearden's im- "If you

turba

it bit

"Sure

ou want,  
r damn regulations let Orren  
of Associated Steel—and it  
from every one of its sixty

"Oh but . . . but we couldn't!" gasped Mouch. "That would be  
popoly!"

"reently "then let my mills  
than Boyle"  
have an advantage over

"Then don't talk about saving the country's economy!"

"All we want is—" He stopped.

"All you want is production without men who're able to produce,  
it?"

"That . . . that's theory. That's just a theoretical extreme. All  
want a temporary adjustment."

"You've been making those temporary adjustments for years  
n't you see that you've run out of time?"

"That's just them—" His voice trailed off and stopped.

not as if  
ely able  
quite be-

ica,



that copper crash of theirs has dealt him a severe financial blow. So it's only a matter of giving him a chance to recover, a helping hand to bridge the gap, a bit of temporary assistance, nothing more. All we have to do is just equalize the sacrifice—then everybody will recover and prosper."

"You've been equalizing sacrifice for over a hundred"—he stopped—"for thousands of years," said Rearden slowly. "Don't you think that you're at the end of the road?"

"That's just theory!" snapped Wesley Mouch.

Rearden smiled. "I know your practice," he said softly. "It's your theory that I'm trying to understand."

He knew that the specific reason behind the Plan was Orren Boyle. He knew that the working of an intricate mechanism, operated by pull, threat, pressure, blackmail—a mechanism like an irrational adding machine run amuck and throwing up any chance sum at the whim of any moment—had happened to add up to Boyle's pressure upon these men to extort for him this last piece of plunder. He knew also that Boyle was not the cause of it or the essential to consider, that Boyle was only a chance rider, not the builder, of the infernal machine that had destroyed the world, that it was not Boyle who had made it possible, nor any of the men in this room. They, too, were only riders on a machine without a driver, they were trembling hitchhikers who knew that their vehicle was about to crash into its final abyss—and it was not love or fear of Boyle that made them cling to their course and press on toward their end. It was something else. It was some one nameless element which they knew and evaded knowing, something which was neither thought nor hope, something he identified only as a certain look in their faces, a furtive look saying: I can get away with it. Why?—he thought. Why do they think they can?

"We can't afford any theories!" cried Wesley Mouch. "We've got to act!"

"Well, then, I'll offer you another solution. Why don't you take over my mills and be done with it?"

The jolt that shook them was genuine terror.

"Oh no!" gasped Mouch.

"We wouldn't think of it!" cried Holloway.

"We stand for free enterprise!" cried Dr. Ferris.

"We don't want to harm you!" cried Lawson. "We're your friends. Mr. Rearden. Can't we all work together? We're your friends."

There, across the room, stood a table with a telephone, the same table most likely, and the same instrument—and suddenly Rearden felt as if he were seeing the convulsed figure of a man bent over that telephone, a man who had then known what he, Rearden, was now beginning to learn, a man fighting to refuse him the same request which he was now refusing to the present tenants of this room—he saw the finish of that fight, a man's tortured face lifted to confront him and a desperate voice saying steadily: "Mr. Rearden, I am not going to you . . . by the woman I love . . . that I am yours."

This was the act he had then called treason.

of what profit?

"Mr. Rearden!" moaned Lawson. "What's the matter?"  
He turned his head, saw Lawson's eyes watching him fearfully  
and guessed what look Lawson had caught in his face

"All right, I'll say it more precisely. You want to eat me and have  
me, too. How do you propose to do it?"

"I don't know how you can say that, after we've given you every  
assurance that we consider you of invaluable importance to the  
country."

You consider  
I consider me  
You sit there,

"—that I feed the last of my wealth away until we all starve to-  
gether. That much irrationality is not possible to any man or any  
looter. For your own sake—never mind the country's or mine—you  
must be counting on something. What?"

He said that.

... their faces, a peculiar  
I were he

alist view

is in it

"There is no such thing as a temporary suicide."

"But it's only for the duration of the emergency! Only until the country recovers!"

How do you expect it to recover?"

There was no answer

"I expect it to recover after it is bankrupt?"

"said Mr Ferns

"-ly in the tone of

o another man

You'll always be a bum. You can't help it. It's in your blood. Or, to be more scientific, you're conditioned that way."

Rearden sat up. It was as if he had been struggling to find the secret combination of a lock and felt, at those words, a faint click within, as of the first tumbler falling into place.

It's only a matter of weathering this crisis," said Mouch, "giving people a reprieve, a chance to catch up."

And then?"

"Then things will improve."

"How?"

There was no answer.

"What will improve them?"

There was no answer.

"Who will improve them?"

"Christ, Mr Rearden, people don't just stand still!" cried Holloway. "They do things, they grow, they move forward!"

What people?

Holloway waved his hand vaguely. "People," he said.

What people? The people to whom you're going to feed the last of Rearden Steel, without getting anything in return? The people to produce?"

"Have you anything left to loot? If you didn't see the nature of your policy before—it's not possible that you don't see it now. Look around you. All those damned People's States all over the earth have been existing only on the handouts which you squeezed for them out of this country. But you—you have no place left to sponge on or mooch from. No country on the face of the globe. That was the greatest and last. You've drained it. You've milked it dry. Of all that irremediable splendor, I'm only one remnant, the last. What will you do, you and your People's Globe, after you've finished me? What are you hoping for? What do you see ahead—except plain, stark, animal starvation?"

They did not answer. They did not look at him. Their faces were pressed one of them was the place of a last

Rearden had felt another click in his mind, the sharper click of a second tumbler connecting the circuits of the lock. He leaned forward. "What are you counting on?" he asked, his tone had changed, it was low, it had the steady, pressing, droning sound of drill.

"It's only a matter of — — — — —"

— He felt a deafening crash within him, as if a steel door dropped open at the touch of the final tumbler, the one small number completing the sum and releasing the intricate lock, the answer uniting all the pieces, the questions and the unsolved wounds of his life. In the moment of — — — — —

ing demand the irrational and someone somehow would provide. If he had accepted the Equalization of Opportunity Bill, if he had accepted Directive 10-289, if he had accepted the law that those who could not equal his ability had the right to dispose of it, that

ly to wish to wish with no concern for the possible—and that is

"do something!"  
He did not know that he had leaped to his feet, that he was lunging down at James Taggart, seeing in the unbridled shapeless



his purposeful speed. They watched him go past and vanish to the haze equating earth with night. He saw his mills rising in the darkness, as a black silhouette against a breathing glow. The glow was the color of burning gold, and "Rearden Steel" stood written across the sky in the cool, white of crystal.

He looked at the long silhouette, the curves of blast furnaces and

of his mind, devoted to his enjoyment of existence, erected a rational world to deal with rational men. If those men had vanished, if that world was gone, if his mills had ceased to serve a value—then the mills were only a pile of dead scrap to be left to crumble, the sooner the better—to be left, not as an act of treason, but as an act of loyalty to their actual meaning.

The mills were still a mile ahead when a small spurt of flame caught his sudden attention. Among all the shades of fire in the vast spread of structures, he could tell the abnormal and the out-of-place: this one was too raw a shade of yellow and it was darting from a spot where no fire had reason to be, from a structure by the gate of the main entrance.

In the next instant, he heard the dry crack of a gunshot, then three answering cracks in swift succession, like an angry hand tapping a sudden assailant.

Then the black mass barring the road in the distance took shape, was not mere darkness and it did not recede as he came closer—it was a mob squirming at the main gate, trying to storm the mills.

He had time to see some of the men with clubs, some with knives, some with guns, some with stones, some with anything they could get their hands on.

He had time to see a human figure twist backward and falling from the top of a car—then he sent his heels into a shrieking curve, turning into the darkness of a side road.

He was going at the rate of sixty miles an hour down the ruts of unpaved soil toward the eastern gate of the mills—and the gate was in sight when the impact of tires on a gully threw the car off the road, to the edge of a ravine where an ancient slag heap lay at the bottom. With the weight of his chest and elbow on the wheel, he pressed against two tons of speeding metal the curve of his wheel, he forced the curve of the car to complete its screaming half-circle, he weeping it back onto the road and into the control of

It had taken one instant, but in the next his foot went down on brake, tearing the engine to a stop for in the moment when headlights had swept the ravine, he had glimpsed an oblong shadow darker than the gray of the weeds on the slope, and it had met to him that a brief white blur had been a human hand waving help

Throwing off  
ravine, lumps of  
the dried  
long black form which he could now distinguish to be a human body. A scum of cotton was swimming against the moon, he could see the white of a hand and the shape of an arm lying stretched in the weeds but the body lay still, with no sign of motion.

Mr Rearden

It was a whisper struggling to be a cry, it was the terrible sort of eagerness fighting against a voice that could be nothing but moan of pain

He did not know which came first, it felt like a single shock thought that the voice was familiar, a ray of moonlight breaking through the cotton the movement of falling down on his knees the white oval of a face, and the recognition. It was the Wet Nurse

He felt the boy's hand clutching his with the abnormal strength agony while he was noticing the tortured lines of the face the drained lips the glazing eyes and the thin, dark trickle from a small black hole in too wrong too close a spot on the left side of the boy's chest

'Mr Rearden . . . I wanted to stop them . . . I wanted to stop you

"What happened to you, kid?"

"You need help. Let's get you to a hospital and—"

'No! Wait! I . . . and I've got to tell you . . . on orders from Washington . . . your workers . . . of goons hired on the outside . . . tell you about it . . . frame up . . . Listen, that riot . . . it's staged . . . It's not workers . . . it's those new boys of theirs and . . . and a lot of goons hired on the outside . . . Don't believe a word they tell you about it . . . It's a frame-up . . . it's their rotten kind of

There was a desperate intensity in the boy's face the intensity of a crusader some fuel that the gre

"They . . . they've got a Steel Unification Plan ready . . . they need an excuse for it . . . because they know that the country won't take it . . . and you won't stand for it . . . They're this one's going to be too much for everybody . . . skin you alive, that's all . . . So they want to starve your workers . . . and the workers

smuck and you're unable to control them      and the government's

..

the intermittent fix of moonlight he could see the trail of flat  
ed weeds and glistening smears going off into the darkness below  
dreaded to think how far the boy had crawled and for how long  
They didn't want you to be here tonight Mr Rearden      They  
n't want you to see their People's rebellion      Afterwards  
you know how they screw up the evidence      there won't  
a straight story to get anywhere      and they hope to fool the  
try      and  
lence      Dr  
l the country

I them that I told you      it's under oath      I swear it  
t makes it legal doesn't it?      doesn't it?      that gives you  
hance?"

Rearden pressed the boy's hand in his "Thank you kid"  
"I'm sorry I'm late, Mr Rearden, but      but they didn't  
me in on it till the last minute      till just before it started  
They called me in on a      a strategy conference      there  
a man there by the name of Peters      from the Unification  
ard      he's a stooge of Tinky Holloway      who's a stooge  
Orren Boyle      What they wanted from me was      they  
sted me to sign a lot of passes      to let some of the goons in  
so they'd start trouble from the inside and the outside together  
to make it look like they really were your workers      I  
used to sign the passes"

"You did? After they'd let you in on their game?"  
"But      but, of course Mr Rearden      Did you think I'd  
y that kind of game?"

"No kid, no I guess not. Only—"

"What?"

"Only that's when you stuck your neck out"

"But I had to!

How long w

ry broke yours?

it's how I had to keep it?

Mr Rearden?"

"Yes, I do"

"I refused them      I ran out of the office      I ran to look  
the superintendent      to tell him everything      but I  
didn't find him      and then I heard shots at the main gate and  
knew it had started      I tried to phone your home      the  
some wires were cut      I ran to get my car I wanted to reach  
a or a policeman or a newspaper or somebody      but they  
ust have been following me      that's when they shot me  
the parking lot . . . from behind      all I remember is



and here      and then when I opened my eyes, they had dumped  
                 on the slag heap  
On the slag heap? said Rearden slowly, knowing that the b  
was a hundred feet below

The boy nodded pointing vaguely down into the darkness "Y  
down there      And then I      I started crawling  
crawling up      I wanted      I wanted to last till I told son  
body who d tell you      The pain twisted lines of his face smoot

and      I could tell his arms the eyes closing the mouth relaxing as u  
hold a moment's profound contentment But you can't stop the  
You're not through You've got to hang on till I get you to a doctor  
and— He was lifting the boy cautiously, but a convulsion of pa  
ran through the boy's face his mouth twisting to stop a cry—as  
Rearden had to lower him gently back to the ground.

The boy shook his head with a glance that was almost apology  
won't make it Mr Rearden      No use fooling myself  
know I'm through

Then as if by some dam recoil against self pity he added recrim  
a memorized lesson his voice a desperate attempt at his old  
cynical intellectual tone What does it matter Mr Rearden?  
Man is only a collection of      conditioned chemicals      and  
man's dying doesn't make      any more difference than an an  
mal's

"You know better than that."

"Yes he whispered Yes I — — —"

fac      en  
kn      "I  
                 "it  
eve      g they said      about living or      or dying      Mying

it wouldn't make any difference to chemicals but—" he  
stopped and all of his desperate protest was only in the intensity of  
his voice dropping lower to say "—but it does to me      And

and I guess it makes a difference to an animal too      But  
they said there are no values      only social customs      No

values!" His hand clutched blindly at the hole in his chest, as if try  
ing to hold that which he was losing No      values

Then his eyes opened wider with the sudden calm of full frank  
ness "I'd like to live Mr Rearden God how I'd like to!" His

voice was passionately quiet Not because I'm dying      but be  
cause I've just discovered it tonight what it means really to be  
alive      And      it's funny      do you know      I'd discovered

it?      In the office      when I stuck my  
told the bastards to go to hell      There's      f  
ngs I wish I'd known sooner      But      f  
ig over spilled milk." He saw Rearden's ac

flattened trail below and added, "Over spilled anything, Mr Rearden?"

"Listen kid," said Rearden sternly, "I want you to do me a favor"

"Now Mr Rearden?"

"Yes Now"

"Why, of course Mr Rearden . . . if I can."

"You've done me a big favor tonight, but I want you to do a still . . ."

For me Because I'm asking you to Because I want you to  
 together you and I"

firmness of the answer, the voice was only a whisper "Listen, Mr Rearden."

"Now help me to get you to a doctor Just relax, take it easy and I'll lift you"

"Yes Mr Rearden." With the jerk of a sudden effort, the boy flung himself up to lean on an elbow

"Take it easy, Tony"

"Tony, that's an absolute  
 Rearden . . . a long cautious effort he saw the

"Are we wet Nurse now?"

"I guess I am"

He took the first steps up the slant of crumbling soil his  
 lashed to the task of shock absorber for his fragile burden  
 task of maintaining a steady progression where the  
 hold to find

The boy . . . on Rearden's shoulder,

as if this were a presumption Rearden bent down and prested lips to the dust-streaked forehead

The boy jerked back, raising his head with a shock of incredulous indignant astonishment "Do you know what you did?" he whispered, as if unable to believe that it was meant for him

of faint, spaced rhythmic shudders to show it, Rearden knew the boy was crying—crying in surrender, in admission of all things which he could not put into the words he had never found

take the form of a gentle, unhurried flow

He heard no sobs but he felt the rhythmic shudders and threw the cloth of his shirt in place of tears he felt the small war liquid spurts flung from the wound by the shudders He knew the tight pressure of his arms was the only answer which the boy was now able to hear and understand—and he held the trembling body as if the strength of his arms could transfuse some part of his living power into the arteries beating ever fainter against him.

Then the sobbing stopped and the boy raised his head. His face seemed thinner and paler but the eyes were lustrous, and he looked up at Rearden straining for the strength to speak

"Mr Rearden I I liked you very much."

"I know it."

The boy's features had no power to form a smile but it was a smile that spoke in his glance as he looked at Rearden's face—he looked at that which he had not known he had been seeking through his life—

brief stab of convulsion in his body, like a last cry of protest and a desire to kill

was a desire to kill

The desire was not directed at the unknown thug who had sent a bullet through the boy's body, or at the looting bureaucrats who

fired the thug to do it but at the boy's teachers who favored him, disarmed, to the thug's gun—at the soft, safe assurance

illegitimate classrooms who, incompetent to answer the queries of a  
for reason, took pleasure in crippling the young minds en-  
d to their care

newhere, he thought, there was this boy's mother, who had  
led with protective concern over his groping steps, while teach-  
um to walk, who had measured his baby formulas with a  
ers caution

ess fatal,  
thought of all the living species that train their young in the

now and, before he has started to think

Will you are you to want to escape a thug's

aw a mother bird pluck  
g then pushing him out  
at was what they did to

the way in which this boy had been  
ved through a  
wildered pro-  
his mangled

a different breed of teachers had once existed, he thought,  
he thought that  
en like Hugh

ng the guards  
new into the gate of the

the odor of antiseptics, he deposited his burden on a bench, no word of explanation to anyone, and walked out, not glancing behind him.

He walked in the direction of the front gate, toward the s of fire and the bursts of guns. He saw, once in a while, a few figures running through the cracks between structures or darting behind black corners, pursued

astonished to notice th

He had subdued the h

at the front gate remained to be beaten. He saw a man swing across a patch of lamplight, swinging a length of pipe at a wall of glass panes, battering them down with an animal relish, dark like a gorilla to the sound of crashing glass, until three human figures descended upon him, carrying him writhing to ground.

The siege of the gate appeared to be ebbing, as if the spine of the mob had been broken.

On the roof of a building above the gate, he saw, as he closed, the slim silhouette of a man who held a gun in each hand, and, from behind the protection of a chimney, kept firing at intervals down into the mob, firing swiftly and, it seemed, in two directions at once, like a sentry protecting the approaches to the gate. The confident skill of his movements, his manner of firing, with no time wasted to take aim, but with the kind of casual abruptness that

peering in his direction. The man waved to someone to replace him, then vanished abruptly from his post.

Rearden hurried on through the short stretch of darkness ahead—but then, from the side, from the crack of an alley, he heard a drunken voice yell, "There he is!" and whirled to see two beefy figures advancing upon him. He saw a leering, mindless face with a mouth hung loose in a joyless chuckle, and a club in a ready fist—he heard the sound of running steps approaching from another direction. He attempted to turn his head, then the club crashed down on his skull from behind—and in the moment of splitting darkness when he

break  
of, the  
but  
His first awareness, as if he had fallen, when he opened his eyes. Then he saw that he

modern, merely gracious room—then he realized that it was his office and that the two men standing beside him were the mills'.

office were  
ombination  
er, nor his

pb nor his business

"I think I'll be all right, Doctor," he said, raising his head

and allow yourself to rest.

e mills beyond  
the run You

do, Doctor."

rk left for you

"Oh yes! I never thought I'd live to see the day when—"

"I know. Go ahead, take care of it. I'll be all right."

"Yes, Mr. Rearden."

"I'll take care of the place," said the superintendent as the doctor  
ried out. "Everything's under control, Mr. Rearden. But it was  
t driest—"

d my life? Some

urnace foreman of ours. Been here two months. Best  
I've ever had. He's the one who got wise to what the gravy boys  
re planning and warned me, this afternoon. Told me to arm our

all expecting any armed resistance. Frank Adams is his name—who organized our defense, ran  
the whole battle, and stood on a roof picking off the scum that  
se too close to the gate. Boy, what a marksman! I shudder to  
sk how many of our lives he saved tonight. Those bastards were  
for blood, Mr. Rearden."

I'd like to see him."

He's waiting somewhere outside. It's he who brought you here,  
when possible."

re charge finish the job  
u, Mr. Rearden?"

nothing else.

le lay still, alone in the silence of his office. He knew  
ning of his mills had ceased to exist, and the ful

knowledge left no room for the pain of regretting an illusion. had seen, in a final image, the soul and essence of his enemies mindless face of the thug with the club. It was not the face it that made him draw back in horror, but the professors, the philosophers the moralists, the mystics who had released that face on the world.

He felt a peculiar cleanliness. It was made of pride and of love for this earth, this earth which was his not theirs. It was the feeling which had moved him through his life, the feeling which so many among men know in their youth, then betray, but which he had never lost.

certainty that his life was his, to be lived with no bondage to anyone and that that bondage had never been necessary. It was the radiance of serenity of knowing that he was free of fear, of pain, of guilt.

If it's true, he thought, that there are avengers who are working for the deliverance of men like me, let them see me now, let them tell me their secret, let them claim me, let them—"Come in!" he said aloud in answer to the knock on his door.

The door opened and he lay still. The man standing on the threshold with disheveled hair, a soot-streaked face and furrowed smudged arms, dressed in scorched overalls and bloodstained shirt, standing as if he wore a cape waving behind him in the wind, was Francisco d'Anconia.

It seemed to Rearden that his consciousness shot forward ahead of his body, it was his body that refused to move, stunned by the shock while his mind was laughing, telling him that this was the most natural, the most to-have-been expected event in the world.

resistibly right.

"You've been torturing yourself for months," said Francisco, reproaching him, "wondering what words you'd use to ask my forgiveness and whether you had the right to ask it if you ever saw me again—but now you see that it isn't necessary, that there's nothing to ask or to forgive."

"Yes," said Rearden, "but I had to ask." He raised his hand over Rearden's forehead. It was like a healing touch that closed the past.

"There's only one thing I want to tell you," said Rearden, "I want you to hear it from me: you kept your oath, you my friend."

"I knew that you knew it. You knew it from the first, no matter what you thought of my actions."

"use you could not force yourself to doubt it."  
That " whispered Rearden, staring at him "that was the  
I had no right to tell you no right to claim as my ex

"Didn't you suppose I'd understand it?"  
I wanted to find you I had no right to look for you  
I all that time you were— He pointed at Francisco's clothes  
his hand dropped helplessly and he closed his eyes  
I was your furnace foreman " said Francisco grinning I didn't  
k you'd mind that. You offered me the job yourself  
You've been here as my bodyguard for two months?"  
Yes."

You've been here ever since—" He stopped  
That's right. On the morning of the day when you were reading  
farewell message over the roofs of New York I was reporting  
for my first shift as your furnace foreman "  
Tell me " said Rearden slowly that night at James Taggart's  
dng when you said that you were after your greatest con  
n you meant me didn't you?  
Of course."

Francisco drew himself up a little as if for a solemn task his  
earnest, the smile remaining only in his eyes I have a great  
to tell you " he said "But first, will you repeat a word you  
offered me and I I had to reject, because I knew that I  
not free to accept it?"  
Rearden smiled "What word *Francisco*?"

Francisco inclined his head in acceptance and answered "Thank  
Hank " Then he raised his head Now I'll tell you the things  
ad come to say but did not finish that night when I came  
for the first time. I think you're ready to hear it."

I am.  
The glare of steel being poured from a furnace shot to the sky  
and the window A red glow went sweeping slowly over the  
is of the office over the empty desk, over Rearden's face, as if  
salute and farewell.

## apter VII "THIS IS JOHN GALT SPEAKING"

A doorbell was ringing like an alarm in a long demanding  
um broken by the impatient stabs of someone's frantic finger  
rapping out of bed Dagny noticed the cold pale sunlight of late  
ning and a clock on a distant spire marking the hour of ten.  
had worked at the office till four A.M. and had left word not to  
ect her till noon.

Her white face ungroomed by panic that confronted her when  
threw the door open, was James Taggart.  
He's gone!" he cried.

Who?"  
Hank Rearden! He's gone quit vanished disappeared!"  
he stood still for a moment, holding the belt of the



gown she had been tying, then, as the full knowledge reached her hands jerked the belt tight—as if snapping her body in two the waistline—while she burst out laughing. It was a sound triumph.

He stared at her in bewilderment. "What's the matter with you? He gasped. 'Haven't you understood?'"

Come in, Jim, she said, turning contemptuously, walking in the living room. "Oh yes, I've understood."

He's quit! Gone! Gone like all the others! Left his mills, his bank accounts, his property everything! Just vanished! Took his clothing and whatever he had in the safe in his apartment—he found a safe left open in his bedroom, open and empty—that's it! No word no note no explanation! They called me from Washington but it's all over town! The news, I mean, the story! They can't keep it.

It got out, but  
break-outs, the  
could stop it,

the chief metallurgist the chief engineer, Rearden's secretary, the hospital doctor! And God knows how many others! Deserting the bastards! Deserting us in spite of all the penalties we've set! He's quit and the rest are quitting and those mills are just there, standing still! Do you understand what that means?"

"Do you?" she asked.

He had thrown his story at her, sentence by sentence, as if trying to knock the smile off her face, an odd, unmoving smile of bitterness and triumph, he had faded. "It's a national catastrophe! What the matter with you? Don't you see that it's a fatal blow? It will break the last of the country's morale and economy! We can't let him vanish! You've got to bring him back!"

Her smile disappeared.

"You can! he cried. "You're the only one who can! He's your lover, isn't he? Oh don't look like that! It's no time for squeamishness! It's no time for anything except that we've got to have him! You must know where he is! You can find him! You must reach him and bring him back!"

The way she now looked at him was worse than her smile—she looked as if she were seeing him naked and would not endure it sight much longer. "I can't bring him back," she said, not raising her voice. "And I wouldn't, if I could. Now get out of here."

"But the national catastrophe—"

"Get out."

She did not notice his exit. She stood alone in the middle of the living room, her head dropping, her shoulders sagging, while she was smiling a smile of pain, of tenderness, of greeting to Hank Rearden. She was so glad that he was right, and yet refused to believe that he was beating in her



she had called to his struggling airplane, but no signal could reach her through that screen

Yet the screen split open for one brief break—for the length of a letter she received a week after he vanished. The envelope bore no return address, only the postmark of some hamlet in Colorado. The letter contained two sentences:

I have met him. I don't blame you.

H. R.

She sat still for a long time, looking at the letter, as if unable to move or to feel. She felt nothing, she thought, then noticed that

knowledge that her blankness was a struggle not to hear was

around her, but of the tunnels below, under the floors of the building—and she had worked, feeling as if some marginal part of her brain was computing figures, reading reports, making decisions in a rush of lifeless activity while her living mind was inactive and frozen in contemplation, forbidden to move beyond the sentence: He's down there. The only inquiry she had permitted herself had been a glance at the payroll list of the Terminal workers. She had seen the name Galt, John. The list had carried it, openly, for over twelve years. She had seen an address next to the name—and, for a month, had struggled to forget it.

There was nothing except a question that was not to be asked. His presence in the tunnels had been her motor through those days—just as his presence in the city had been her motor through the months of the summer—just as his presence somewhere in the world had been her motor through the years before she ever heard his name. Now she felt as if her motor too had stopped.

She went on, with the bright, pure glitter of a five-dollar gold piece which she kept in her pocket, as her last drop of fuel. She went on protected from the world around her by a last armor, indifference.

The newspapers did not mention the outbreaks of violence that had begun to burst across the country—but she watched them through the reports of train conductors about bullet-riddled tracks, attacked trains, besieged stations, in



walls of buildings—then billboards on deserted highways

"Don't despair! Listen to Mr. Thompson!" said pennants on government cars. "Don't give up! Listen to Mr. Thompson!" said banners in offices and shops. "Have faith! Listen to Mr. Thompson!" said voices in churches. "Mr. Thompson will give you the answer!" wrote army airplanes across the sky. The letters dissolving in space, and only the last two words remaining by the time the sentence was completed.

Public loud-speakers were built in the squares of New York for the day of the speech and came to rasping life once an hour in time with the ringing of distant clocks to send over the worn rattle of the traffic over the heads of the shabby crowds the sonorous mechanical cry of an alarm-toned voice: "Listen to Mr. Thompson's report on the world crisis. November 22!"—a cry rolling through the frosted air and vanishing among the foggy roof tops under the blank page of a calendar that bore no date.

On the afternoon of November 22 James Taggart told Dagny that Mr. Thompson wished to meet her for a conference before the broadcast.

"In Washington?" she asked incredulously, glancing at her watch.  
"Well, I must say that you haven't been reading the newspapers or keeping track of important events. Don't you know that Mr. Thompson is to broadcast from New York? He has come here to confer with the leaders of industry as well as of labor, science, the professions, and the best of the country's leadership in general. He has requested that I bring you to the conference."

"Where is it to be held?"  
"At the broadcasting studio."  
"They don't expect me to speak on the air in support of their policies, do they?"

"Don't worry, they wouldn't let you near a microphone! They just want to hear your opinion, and you can't refuse, not in a national broadcast. Thompson in person."

"Not much time to give to a conference about a national emergency, is it?"

"Yes, but—"

"Eddie Willers along with me."

He frowned, considering it for a moment with a look of annoyance more than anxiety. "Oh, all right, if you wish," he snapped, shrugging.

She came to the broadcasting studio with James Taggart as a policeman on one side of her and Eddie Willers as a bodyguard at the other. Taggart's face was resentful and tense. Eddie's—resigned, wondering and curious. A stage set of pasteboard walls had been



It was 7 50 when Chick Morrison, the Morale Conditioner who seemed to be in charge cried "All right, boys and girls all right, let's take our places!" waving a bunch of notepaper like a baton toward the light flooded circle of armchairs

Mr Thompson thudded down upon the central chair in the manner of grabbing a vacant seat in a subway

Chick Morrison's assistants were herding the crowd toward the circle of light

A

see u

The i

gasp

He shrugged and went on: —happy family "Hurry up boys Take close ups of Mr Thompson first

The hand of the clock went slicing off the minutes while press photographers clicked their cameras at Mr Thompson's sourly impatient face

Mr Thompson will sit between science and industry!" Chick Morrison announced Dr Stadler please—the chair on Mr Thompson's left Miss Taggart—this way please—on Mr Thompson's right

Dr Stadler obeyed She did not move

It's not just for the press it's for the television audiences," Chick Morrison said "inducement in this program"

if look he would refused to per

form its part.

"Dagny for Christ's sake!" cried James Taggart in panic.

"What's the matter with her?" asked Mr Thompson.

"But Miss Taggart Why?" cried Chick Morrison

You all know why she said to the faces around her "You should have known better than to try that again."

"Miss Taggart yelled Chick Morrison as she turned to go "It's a national emer—"

Then a man came rushing toward Mr Thompson and she stopped, as did everyone else—and the look on the man's face swept the crowd into an abruptly total silence He was the station's chief engineer and he was in a terrible terror struggling

t have to delay the

What? cried Mr Thompson

The hand of the dial stood at 7 58

"We're trying to fix it, Mr Thompson, we're trying to find out what it is"

"What"

"We're

"I don't know! But . . . We . . . we can't get on the air, Mr Thompson."

There was a moment of silence, then Mr Thompson asked, his voice unnaturally low, "Are you crazy?"

"I must be I wish I were I can't make it out. The station is dead."

"Mechanical trouble?" yelled Mr Thompson, leaping to his feet. "Mechanical trouble, God damn you, at a time like this? If that's

... .. wly, in the manner of an  
... .. "It's not this station, Mr  
... .. in the country, as far  
... .. mechanical trouble  
... .. in order, in perfect  
... .. but all radio stations  
... .. and nobody can dis-

"But—" cried Mr Thompson, stopped glanced about him and screamed, "Not tonight! You can't let it happen tonight! You've got to get me on the air!"

"Mr Thompson," the man said slowly, "we've called the electronic laboratory of the State Science Institute. They . . . they've never seen anything like it. They said it might be a natural phenomenon, some sort of cosmic disturbance of an unprecedented kind, only—"

"Well?"  
"Only they don't think it is. We don't, either. They said it looks like radio waves, but of a frequency never produced before, never observed anywhere, never discovered by anybody."

No one answered him. In a moment, he went on his voice oddly solemn "It looks like a wall of radio waves jamming the air, and we can't get through it, we can't touch it, we can't break it. What's more we can't locate its source not by any of our usual methods—"

... .. child's toy!  
... .. behind Mr Thompson  
... .. arried by its note of  
... .. there's no such thing!

peculiar terror, it came from Dr Stadler  
There . . . . . make it!"  
... .. "That's it, Dr Stadler,"  
... .. shouldn't be possible. But

"Well, do something about it!" cried Mr Thompson to the crowd at large.

No one answered or moved.  
"I won't permit it! To speech! Do something!"  
... .. it!"  
... .. askly

... .. very electronic engineer  
... .. are the lot of you in  
in the country! I'll put the whole profession on trial for safe  
desertion and treason! Do you hear me? Now do something  
damn you! Do something!"



The chief engineer was looking at him impassively, as if words were not conveying anything any longer

Isn't there anybody around to obey an order?" cried Mr Thompson. Isn't there a brain left in this country?

The hand of the clock reached the dot of 8 00

Ladies and gentlemen said a voice that came from the radio receiver—a man's clear calm implacable voice the kind of voice that had not been heard on the airwaves for years—Mr Thompson will not speak to you tonight His time is up I have taken it over You were to hear a report on the world crisis That is what you are going to hear

Three gasps of recognition greeted the voice but nobody had the power to notice them among the sounds of the crowd which were beyond the stage of cries One was a gasp of triumph another—of terror the third—of bewilderment Three persons had recognized the speaker Dagny Dr Stadler Eddie Willers Nobody glanced at Eddie Willers but Dagny and Dr Stadler glanced at each other She saw that his face was distorted by as evil a terror as one could ever bear to see he saw that she knew and that the way she looked at him was as if the speaker had slapped his face

"For twelve years you have been asking Who is John Galt? This is John Galt speaking I am the man who loves his life I am the man who does not sacrifice his love or his values I am the man who has deprived you of victims and thus has destroyed your world and if you wish to know why you are perishing—you who dread knowledge—I am the man who will now tell you.

The chief engineer was the only one able to move he ran to a television set and struggled frantically with its dials But the screen remained empty the speaker had not chosen to be seen Only his voice filled the airways of the country—of the world thought the chief engineer—sounding as if he were speaking here in this room

You had no meaning You have cried that man's sins are destroying the world and you have cursed human nature for its unwillingness to practice the virtues you demanded Since virtue to you consists of sacrifice you have demanded more sacrifices at every successive disaster In the name of a return to morality you have sacrificed all those evils which you held as the cause of your plight You have sacrificed justice to mercy You have sacrificed independence to unity You have sacrificed reason to faith You have sacrificed wealth to need You have sacrificed self-esteem to self-denial You have sacrificed happiness to duty

"You have destroyed all that which you held to be evil and achieved all that which you held to be good Why, then do you shrink in horror from the sight of the world around you? That world is not the product of your sins it is the product and the image of your virtues It is your moral ideal brought into reality in its final perfection. You have fought for it, you have

if you have wished it, and I—I am the man who has granted  
your wish.

Your ideal had an implacable enemy, which your code of moral  
was designed to destroy I have withdrawn that enemy I have  
I have removed  
one I have  
deprived your

withdrawn those  
the mind is impotent you say I have withdrawn those  
the mind isn't. There are values higher than the mind you say?  
I've withdrawn those for whom there aren't

altars the men of  
if-esteem—I beat  
ture of the game  
le of yours which

too innocently generous to grasp I showed them the  
y to live by another morality—mine It is mine that they chose to  
lose

(All the men who have vanished the men you hated yet dreaded  
lose, it is I who have taken them away from you Do not attempt  
find us We do not choose to be found Do not cry that it is our  
ly to serve you We do not recognize such duty Do not cry that  
I need us We do not consider need a claim Do not cry that you  
n us You don't Do not beg us to return We are on strike we  
men of the mind

We are on strike against self immolation We are on strike against  
creed of unearned rewards and unrewarded duties We are on  
the against the dogma that the pursuit of one's happiness is evil  
are on strike against the doctrine that life is guilt

There is a difference between our strike and all those you've

We  
ing

your economics We have chosen not to exist you  
are dangerous and to be shirked according to your politics

er

without mind

We have granted you everything you demanded of us we who

ut, no com  
it need you  
wanted? A

I want us to  
ways known  
use now we

Now it, too  
Through centuries of scourges and disasters brought about by

your code of morality, you have cried that your code had broken, that the scourges were punishment for breaking it, men were too weak and too selfish to spill all the blood it required. You damned man you damned existence, you damned this earth but never dared to question your code. Your victims took the blows and struggled on with your curses as reward for their martyrdom while you went on crying that your code was noble, but human nature was not good enough to practice it. And no one rose to ask the question: Good?—by what standard?

"You wanted to know John Galt's identity. I am the man who has asked that question.

"Yes, this is an age of moral crisis. Yes, you are bearing punishment for your evil. But it is not man who is now on trial and not human nature that will take the blame. It is your moral code that's through this time. Your moral code has reached its end, the blind alley at the end of its course. And if you wish to go on living, what you now need is not to return to morality—you have never known any—but to discover it.

"You have heard no concepts of morality but the mystical or social. You have been taught that morality is a code of behavior imposed on you by whim, the whim of a supernatural power or the whim of society, to serve God's purpose or your neighbor's well-being, to please an authority beyond the grave or else next door—but never to serve your own mind.

"For centuries the battle of morality was fought between those who claimed that your life belongs to God and those who claimed that it belongs to your neighbors—between those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of ghosts in heaven and those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of incompetents on earth. And no one came to say that your life belongs to you and that the good is to live it.

"Both sides agreed that morality demands the surrender of your self-interest and of your mind, that the moral and the practical are opposites, that morality is not the province of reason but the province of faith and force. Both sides agreed that no rational morality is possible, that there is no right or wrong in reason—because in reason there is no reason to be moral.

"Whatever else they fought about, it was against man's mind. All your moralists have stood united. It was man's mind that all their schemes and systems were intended to despoil and destroy. They choose to perish or to learn that the anti-mind is the anti-life.

"Man's mind is his basic tool of survival. Life is given to the man who survives. Life is not given to the man who does not survive.

ve it. To remain alive, he must think.

ut to think is an act of choice. The key to what you so  
sly call 'human nature,' the open secret you live with yet  
to name is the fact that *man is a being of volitional consciousness*.  
Reason does not work automatically, thinking = not a mechan-  
rocess: the connections of logic are not made by instinct. The  
ion of your stomach, lungs or heart is automatic; the function  
ur mind is not. In any hour and issue of your life you are free  
sk or to evade that effort. But you are not free to escape from  
nature from the fact that *reason is your means of survival*—so  
for you who are a human being the question to be or not to  
the question 'to think or not to think.'

being of volitional consciousness has no automatic course of  
ior. He needs a code of values to guide his actions. Value  
it which one acts = gain and keep, 'virtue is the action by  
one gains and keeps it. Value' presupposes an answer to the  
ion of value = whom and for what? 'Value' presupposes a  
ard a purpose and the necessity of action in the face of an  
ative. Where there are no alternatives no values are possible.  
here is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: exist  
or non-existence—and it pertains to a single class of entities  
ing organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is uncon-  
nd the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course  
ion. Matter is indestructible: it changes its forms but it  
it cease to exist. It = only a living organism that faces a con-  
altern

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il.  
plant must feed itself in order to live: the sunlight, the water,  
hemicals it needs are the values its nature has set it to pursue,  
le is the standard of value directing its actions. But a plant  
so choice of action: there are alternatives in the conditions it  
nature h + h.

it acts auto-  
a destruction.  
senses provide  
knowledge of

good for it or evil. It has no power to extend its knowl-  
or to evade it. In conditions where its knowledge proves in-  
ate, it dies. But so long as it lives it acts on its knowledge,  
automatic safety and no power of choice. It is unable to ignore  
an good, unable to decide to choose the evil and act as its own  
oyer.

lan has no automatic code of survival. His particular distinction  
all other living species is the necessity to act in the face of  
natives by means of *volitional choice*. He has no automatic  
ledge of what is good for him or evil: what values his life  
nds on, what course of action it requires. Are you prattling  
t an instinct of self preservation? An instinct of --



ing daughter on the altars of others, is giving you *death* as your  
herd. By the grace of reality and the nature of life, man—every

was proper to man. The purpose of morality is to teach you,  
to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself and live.

I keep aside those parasites of subsidized classrooms, who live  
the profits of the mind of others and proclaim that man needs  
morality, no values, no code of behavior. They, who pose as  
nihilists and claim that man is only an animal, do not grant him  
sense in the law of existence they have granted to the lowest  
sects. They recognize that every living species has a way of  
val demanded by its nature, they do not claim that a fish can  
live out of water or that a dog can live without its sense of smell—  
even, they claim, the most complex of beings man can survive  
any way whatever, man has no identity, no nature, and there is  
no actual reason why he cannot live with his means of survival  
ruined, with his mind throttled and placed at the disposal of any  
one they might care to issue

... as friends of

choice to

... the ...

moral choice  
tive is that  
around you,  
an and less

animal, a thing that knows nothing but pain and drags itself  
in its span of years in the agony of unthinking self-destruction.  
... an act of moral choice. But  
... if you choose to default,  
... deficit to some moral man.  
... the sake of letting you sur-

... you do not have to be a ... at today those who are, are  
... are any longer. I have removed your means of survival—  
... actions  
... you wish to know how I have done it and what I told them  
... he them quit, you are hearing it now. I told them in essence,  
... statement I am making tonight. They were men who had a  
... code, but had not known how great a virtue it

I made them see it. I brought them, not a re-evaluation, but an identification of their values

"We, the men of the mind, are now on strike against your name of a single axiom, which is the root of our moral as well as the root of yours is the wish to escape  $\equiv$  the axiom *existence exists*

"Existence exists—and the act of grasping that statement is two corollary axioms: that something exists which one perceives that one exists possessing consciousness, consciousness being a faculty of perceiving that which exists

"If nothing exists, there can be no consciousness: a consciousness with nothing to be conscious of is a contradiction in terms. Consciousness conscious of nothing but itself is a contradiction before it could identify itself as consciousness: it had to be conscious of something. If that which you claim to perceive does not exist, what you possess is not consciousness

"Whatever the degree of your knowledge, these two—existence and consciousness—are axioms you cannot escape, these two irreducible primaries implied in any action you undertake, a part of your knowledge and in its sum, from the first ray of light you perceive at the start of your life to the widest erudition you might acquire at its end. Whether you know the shape of a planet or the structure of a solar system, the axioms remain the same: *it exists and that you know it.*

"To exist is to be something, as distinguished from the non-existence, it is to be an entity of a specific nature manifesting specific attributes. Centuries ago the man who was—no matter his errors—the greatest of philosophers defining the concept of

*A is A* A thing is itself  
statement: I am here to complete it (*Existence  $\equiv$  consciousness*)  
consciousness  $\equiv$  Identification

"Whatever you choose to consider, be it an object, an action or an action: the law of identity remains the same. *A* leaf cannot be a stone at the same time,  $\equiv$  cannot be all red and all green at the same time  $\equiv$  cannot freeze and burn at the same time. *A is A* if you wish  $\equiv$  stated in simpler language: You cannot have a cake and eat it, too.

"Are you seeking to know what is wrong with the statement: *A is A* . . .  
attention  
face

your attempt to evade the fact that *A* is Man  
those who taught you to evade it, was to make

"Man cannot survive except by gaining knowledge. His only means to gain  $\equiv$  Reason is the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by his senses is to give him the evidence of existence. It belongs to his reason: his duty is to learn it, but *what it is* must be learned

\*All thinking is a process of identification and integration. Man receives a blob of color; by integrating the evidence of his sight and his touch, he learns to identify it as a solid object, he learns to copy the object as a table, he learns that the table is made of wood, he is

is con-  
brought  
single  
his an-

his an-  
is logic, and logic rests on the axiom that existence exists.  
is the art of *non-contradictory identification*. A contradiction  
not exist. An atom is itself, and so is the universe, neither can  
contradict its own identity, nor can a part contradict the whole.  
concept man forms is valid unless he integrates it without con-  
dition into the total sum of his knowledge. To arrive at a con-  
dition is to confess an error in one's thinking, to maintain a  
contradiction is to abdicate one's mind and to evict oneself from the  
lm of reality.

"Reality is that which exists the unreal does not exist the unreal

Wedge that you can claim to possess or ask others to consider  
dissent from  
but a man's  
of identifica-  
but his own  
ral integrity  
une separate

ment opposed to reason—man's reason is his moral faculty. Process of reason is a process of constant choice in answer to the question True or False?—Right or Wrong? Is a seed to be planted in order to grow—right or wrong? Is a man's wound to be infected in order to get better—right or wrong? Does the nation

2. Judicial Process is a search.  
any step of it, with nothing to protect you but your own  
ity, or you may try to cheat, to fake the evidence and evade  
effort of the quest—but if devotion to truth is the hallmark of  
ality, then there is no greater, nobler, more heroic form of de-  
on than the act of a man who assumes the responsibility  
king

That which you call your soul or spirit is your conscience  
that which is your mind's freedom



or not, the only will you have, your only freedom, the choice that controls all the choices you make and determines your life and your character

"Thinking is man's only basic virtue, from which all the others proceed. And his basic vice, the source of all his evils, is the nameless act which all of you practice, but struggle never to admit: the act of blanking out, the willful suspension of one's consciousness, the refusal to think—not blindness, but the refusal to see, ignorance, but the refusal to know. It is the act of unfocusing your mind and inducing an inner fog to escape the responsibility of judgment—on the unstated premise that a thing will not exist only if you refuse to identify it, that A will not be A so long as you do not pronounce the verdict 'It is.' Non-thinking is an act of nihilism, a wish to negate existence, an attempt to wipe out reality. But existence exists, reality is not to be wiped out, it is merely wiped out by the wiper. By refusing to say 'It is,' you are refusing to say 'I am.' By suspending your judgment, you are negating your person. When a man declares 'Who am I to know?'—he is declaring 'Who am I to live?'

"Thus, in every hour and every issue, is your basic moral choice: thinking or non-thinking, existence or non-existence, A or non-entity or zero.

"To the extent to which a man is rational, life is the premise directing his actions. To the extent to which he is irrational, the premise directing his actions is death.

"You who prattle that morality is social and that man works for it—

"If I were to speak your kind of language, I would say that man's only moral commandment is 'Thou shalt think.' But a 'moral commandment' is a contradiction in terms. The moral is the chosen, the free, the understood, not the obeyed. The moral is the rational, and reason accepts no commandments.

"My morality, the morality of reason, is contained in a single axiom: existence exists—and in a single choice: to live. The rest proceeds from these. To live, man must hold three things as the supreme and ruling values of his life: Reason—Purpose—Self-esteem. Reason, as his only tool of knowledge—Purpose, as his choice of happiness which that tool must proceed to achieve—Self-esteem, as his inviolate certainty that his mind is competent to think and that he is a person worthy of happiness, which means, is worthy of living. These three values imply and require all of man's virtues, and his virtues pertain to the relation of existence and consciousness: rationality, independence, integrity, honesty, justice, prudence, etc.

"Rationality is the recognition of the fact that existence exists, that  
nothing can alter the truth and nothing can take precedence over  
it—your mind is one's  
—that reason  
oppression to  
W from the  
the alleged  
—will destroy—  
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one's

Independence is the recognition of the fact that you are the re-  
sponsibility of judgment and nothing can help you escape it—that  
your  
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e ac-  
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—your  
it you  
—that man is an indivisible unit in ex-  
istence—two attributes of matter and consciousness, and  
that he may permit no breach between body and mind, between  
action and thought, between his life and his convictions—that, like  
judge impervious to public opinion, he may not sacrifice his  
convictions to the wishes of others, be it the whole of mankind  
—that courage and confidence  
form of being  
confidence is the  
ness

—unreal is unreal  
—nor cash is a  
a value by de-  
—that you are raising your victims to a  
position higher than reality, where you become a pawn of their  
blindness, a slave of their non thinking and their evasions, while  
their intelligence, their rationality, their perceptiveness become the  
serVICES you have to dread and flee—that you do not care to live  
—that you are dependent on the stupidity of others,  
—like of  
e his  
cluded

Justice is the recognition — that  
character of men as you cannot fake the character of — that  
you must judge all men as conscientiously as you judge inanimate  
objects, with the same respect for truth, with the same in-  
—by as pure and as rational a process of identifica-  
—for what he is and treated  
every man

an honor as you bring to financial transactions—that to withhold your contempt from men's vices is an act of moral counterfeit and to withhold your admiration from their virtues is an act

tice and only the evil can profit—and that the bottom of life at the end of that road, men for their virtues and the collapse to full death the dedication of your existence

"Productiveness is your acceptance of morality, your recognition of the fact that you choose to live—that productive work is a process by which man's consciousness controls his existence, a constant process of acquiring knowledge and shaping matter to fit one purpose of translating an idea into physical form, of remaking the earth in the image of one's values—that all work is creative work if done by a

from wide

less is mind can handle is to become a fear corroded ape on borrowed notions and borrowed time, and to settle down into a job that requires less than your mind's full capacity is to cut your motor and sentence yourself to another kind of motion decay—that your work is the process of achieving your values, and to lose your ambition to values is to lose your ambition to live—that your body is a machine, but your mind is its driver, and you must drive as far as your mind will take you, with achievement as the goal of your road—

wreck being towed in the scrap heap, and the man who makes another man his goal is a hitchhiker no driver should ever pick up—that your work is the purpose of your life, and you must speed past any killer who assumes the right to stop you, that any value you might find outside your work, any other loyalty or love, can be only travelers you choose to share your journey and must be travelers going on their own power in the same direction.

"Pride is the recognition of the fact that you are your own highest value and, like all of man's values, it has to be earned—that of any achievements open to you, the one that is possible is the creation of your own character—that your actions, your desires, your emotions are if

premises held by your mind—that as man must produce the physical values he needs to sustain his life, so he must acquire the values of character that make his life worth sustaining—that as man is a

his own moral perfection, valuing nothing higher than itself—and

Magnant decay of others

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itself.

"Just as your body has two fundamental sensations pleasure and pain, as signs of its welfare or injury as a barometer of its basic alternative life or death so your consciousness has two fundamental emotions, joy and suffering in answer to the same alternative. Your emotions are estimates of that which furthers your life or threatens it, lightning calculators giving you a sum of your profit or loss. You have no choice about your capacity to feel that something is good for you or evil but what you will consider good or evil what will give you joy or pain what you will love or hate desire or fear depends on your standard of value. Emotions are values are the mix of contraindication machine

wreck you on your first attempt to move  
you the driver have corrupted.

"If you hold the irrational as your standard of value  
possible as ~~your~~ content of the good, if you long for

have not earned for a few years—  
loophole in the  
your whim if  
it Do not cry,  
happiness is impossible to man, check your fuel it brought you  
where you wanted to go

"Happiness is not to be achieved at the command of emotional whims Happiness is not the satisfaction of whatever irrational wishes you might blindly attempt to indulge Happiness is a state of non-contradictory joy—a joy without penalty or guilt, a joy that does not clash with any of your values and does not work for your own destruction not the joy of escaping from your mind, but of using your mind's fullest power, not the joy of faking reality, but of achieving values that are real, not the joy of a drunkard, but of a producer Happiness is possible only to a rational man, the man who desires nothing but rational goals, seeks nothing but rational values and finds his joy in nothing but rational actions

Just as I support my life, neither by robbery nor alms, but by my own effort so I do not seek to derive my happiness from the injury or the favor of others, but earn it by my own achievement Just as I do not consider the pleasure of others as the goal of my life, so I do not consider my pleasure as the goal of the lives of others Just as there are no contradictions in my values and no conflicts among my desires—so there are no victims and no conflicts of interest among rational men, men who do not desire the

except in trade for material values, so he does not give the values of his spirit—his love, his friendship, his esteem—except in payment and in trade for human virtues, in payment for his own selfish pleasure, which he receives from men he can respect The mystic parasites who have, throughout the ages, reviled the traders and held them in contempt, while honoring the beggars and the looters, have known the secret motive of their sneers a trader is the enemy they dread—a man of justice

"Do you ask what moral obligation I owe to my fellow men? None—except the obligation I owe to myself, to material objects and to all of existence rationality I deal with men as my nature and theirs demands by means of reason I seek or desire nothing from them except such relations as they care to enter of their own voluntary choice It is only with their mind that I can deal and only for my own self-interest, when they see that coincides with theirs When they don't, I enter no  
lers go their way and I do not swerve from

by means of nothing but logic and I surrender to nothing but logic  
I do not surrender my reason or deal with men who surrender theirs.  
I have nothing to gain from it.

right, he will learn; if I am wrong, I will, one of us will win, but  
both will profit.

"Whatever may be open to disagreement, there is one act of evil  
that may not be done."

ability capacity to live

"Do not surrender your reason to a man who is not a reasoner."

unless your own character and can no longer claim the sanction of  
reason—as no advocate of contradictions can claim it. There can  
be no 'right' to destroy the source of rights, the only means of judg-  
ing right and wrong: the mind.

"To force a man to drop his own mind and to accept your will  
is a great evil."

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others or the moral degenerate who grants his will to  
force his mind. That is the moral absolute one does not leave  
to debate. I do not grant the terms of reason to men who  
deprive me of reason. I do not enter discussions with

who think they can forbid me to think I do not place my moral sanction upon a murderer's wish to kill me When a man attempts to deal with me by force I answer him—by force

—and d

It is only as retaliation the man who starts its us his concept of morality I the only destruction he h force to seize a value I use it only to destroy destruction. A holdup man seeks to gain wealth by killing me I do not grow richer by killing a holdup man I seek no values by means of evil nor do I surrender my values to evil.

In the name of all the producers who had kept you alive and received your death ultimatums in payment I now answer you with a single ultimatum of our own Our work or your guns You can choose either you can't have both We do not initiate the use of force against others or submit to force at their hands If you desire ever again to live in an industrial society it will be on *our* moral terms Our terms and our motive power are the antithesis of yours You have been using fear as your weapon and have been bringing death to man as his punishment for rejecting your morality We offer him life as his reward for accepting ours

You who are worshippers of the zero—you have never discovered that achieving life is not the equivalent of avoiding death Joy is not the absence of pain intelligence is not the absence of stupidity light is not 'the absence of darkness' an entity is not 'the absence of a nonentity' Building is not done by abstaining from demolition centuries of sitting and waiting in such abstinence will not raise one single girder for you to abstain from demolishing—and now you can no longer say to me the builder Produce and feed us in exchange for our *not* destroying your production I am answering in the name of all your victims Perish with and in your own void Existence is not a negation of negatives Evil not value is an absence and a negation evil is impotent and has no power but that which we let it extort from us Perish because we have learned that a zero cannot hold a mortgage over life

You seek escape from pain We seek the achievement of happiness You exist for the sake of avoiding punishment. We exist for the sake of earning rewards Threats will not make us function fear is not our incentive It is not death that we wish to avoid, but life that we wish to live

"You who have lost the concept of the difference you who alarm that fear and joy are incentives of equal power—and secretly add that fear is the more 'practical'—you do not wish to live and only fear of death still holds you to the existence you have damned. You dart in panic through the trap of your days looking for the exit you have closed running from a pursuer you dare not name to a terror you dare not acknowledge and the greater your terror the greater your dread of the only act that could save you thinking The purpose of your struggle is not to know not to grasp or name or hear the thing I shall now state to your hearing that yours

Moralty of Death.

"Death is the standard of your values, death is your chosen goal, and you have to keep running, since there is no escape from the pursuer who is out to destroy you or from the knowledge that that pursuer is yourself. Stop running for once—there is no place to run—stand naked, as you dread to stand, but as I see you and take a look at what you dared to call a moral code.

"Damnation is the start of your morality, destruction is its purpose means and end. Your code begins by damning man as evil, then demands that he practice a good which is defined as impossible for him to practice. It demands, as his first proof of virtue that he accept his own depravity without proof. It demands that he start, not with a standard of value, but with a standard of evil which is himself, by means of which he is then to define the good the good is that which he is not.

"It does not matter who then becomes the profiteer on his renounced glory and tormented soul, a mystic God with some incomprehensible design or any passer by whose rotting sores are held as some inexplicable claim upon him—it does not matter, the proof is in the result.

through the effort of playing to bear responsibility and to save his name but the decision is weighted in favor of a tendency that he had no power to escape. If the tendency is of his choice, he cannot

tree of knowledge—he acquired a mind and a soul—he became a moral being. It was the knowledge of good and evil—he became a moral being. He was sentenced to earn his bread by his labor—he became a productive being. He was sentenced to experience the capacity of sexual enjoyment. The evils for which he was damned are reason, morality, creativeness, joy—all that damn him are reason, morality, creativeness, joy—all that are values of his existence. It is not his vices that their



fall is designed to explain and condemn, it is not his errors that they hold as his guilt but the essence of his nature as man. Whatever he was—that robot in the Garden of Eden, who existed without mind without values, without labor, without love—he was not man.

"Man's fall, according to your teachers, was that he gained the virtues required to live. These virtues, by their standard, are his Sin. His evil they charge, is that he's man. His guilt, they charge, is that he lives.

"They call it a morality of mercy and a doctrine of love for man. No they say they do not preach that man is evil the evil is only that alien object his body. No they say they do not wish to kill him they only wish to make him lose his body. They seek to help him they say against his pain—and they point at the torture rack to which they've tied him the rack with two wheels that pull him in opposite directions, the rack of the doctrine that splits his soul and body.

"They have cut man in two, setting one half against the other. They have taught him that his body and his consciousness are two enemies engaged in deadly conflict, two antagonists of opposite natures contending.

leads into the freedom of the grave.

"They have taught man that he is a hopeless misfit made of two elements, both symbols of death. A body without a soul is a corpse a soul without a body is a ghost—yet such is their image of man's nature the battleground of a struggle between a corpse and a ghost a corpse endowed with some evil volition of its own and a ghost endowed with the knowledge that everything known to man is non-existent, that only the unknowable exists.

"Do you observe what human faculty that doctrine was designed to ignore? It was man's mind that had to be negated in order to make him fall apart. Once he surrendered reason he was left at the mercy of two monsters whom he could not control.

"And as he now crawls through the wreckage, groping blindly for a way to live, your teachers offer him the help of a morality that proclaims that he'll find no solution and must seek no fulfillment on earth. Real existence they tell him, is that which he cannot perceive, true consciousness is the faculty of perceiving the non-existent—and if he is unable to understand it, that is the proof that his existence is evil and his consciousness impotent.

"As products of the split between man's soul and body, there are two kinds of teachers of the Morality of Death the mystics of spirit and the mystics of muscle, whom you call the spiritualists and the materialists, those who believe in consciousness without body and those who believe in existence without consciousness.



you can afford it is *not* a sacrifice. If you give him money at cost of your own discomfort it is only a partial virtue according to this sort of moral standard. If you give him money at the cost of disaster to yourself—that is the virtue of sacrifice in full.

If you renounce all personal desires and dedicate your life to those you love you do not achieve full virtue. You still retain value of your own which is your love. If you devote your life to random strangers—that is an act of greater virtue. If you devote your life to serving men you hate—that is the greatest of the virtues. It can practice.

"A sacrifice is the surrender of a value. Full sacrifice is the surrender of all values. If you wish to achieve full virtue, you seek no gratitude in return for your sacrifice, no praise, no love, admiration, no self-esteem, not even the pride of being virtuous. The faintest trace of any gain taints your virtue. If you pursue a course of action that does not taint your life by any joy that brings you no value in matter, no value in spirit, no gain, no proud reward—if you achieve this state of total zero you have achieved the ideal of moral perfection.

"You  
by this  
but the  
closely

"If you  
seeking to be eaten with no values to reject and no wishes to renounce you will not win the crown of sacrifice. It is not a sacrifice to renounce the unwanted. It is not a sacrifice to give your life to others if death is your personal desire. To achieve the virtue of sacrifice you must want to live, you must love it, you must be with passion for this earth and for all the splendor it can give you. You must feel the twist of every knife as it slashes your desire away from your reach and drains your love out of your body. It holds out to you

this life on earth

If you wish to save the last of your dignity do not call your actions a sacrifice. That term brands you as immoral. If a mother buys food for her hungry child rather than a hat for herself—that is *not* a sacrifice. She values the child higher than the hat but it is a sacrifice in the kind of mother whose higher value is the hat. She would prefer her child to starve and feeds him only from a sense of duty. If a man dies fighting for his own freedom it is a sacrifice. He is not willing to live as a slave but it is a sacrifice in the kind of man who is willing. If a man refuses to sell his convictions it is *not* a sacrifice unless he is the sort of man who has no convictions.

"Sacrifice could be proper only for those who have no desires—no values, no standards, no judgments. Desires are irrational whims blindly conceived and followed. For a man of moral stature whose desires are

sacrifice is the surrender of the right to the wrong, of the good to the evil.

The creed of sacrifice is a morality for the immoral—a morality declares its own bankruptcy by confessing that it can't impart any personal stake in virtues or values, and that their souls are victims of depravity, which they must be taught to sacrifice. By a confession, it is impotent to teach men to be good and can subject them to constant punishment.

Are you thinking, in some foggy stupor, that it's only *material* that your morality requires you to sacrifice? And *what* do *unk* are material values? Matter has no value except as a means for the satisfaction of human desires. Matter is only a means to human values. To what service are you asked to give the *al* tools your virtue has produced? To the service of that *you* regard as evil.

Do you think you can get values from matter? A man whose values are given no value in material form, whose existence is unrelated to his *whose* actions contradict his convictions, is a cheap little *the*—yet that is the man who obeys your morality and does

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prod  
matter,

How can you believe that the values of their spirit cannot be turned into material reality? You say it is the spirit that such men have renounced? Yes, *the* You cannot have one without the other. You are an *ible* entity of matter and consciousness. Renounce your *ness* and you become a brute. Renounce your body and you *e* a fake. Renounce the material world and you surrender it

And that is precisely the goal of your morality: the duty that *ade* demands of you. Give to that which you do not enjoy, that which you do not admire submit to that which you *tr* evil—surrender the world to the values of others: deny, renounce your *self*. Your self is your *mind*: renounce it and come a chunk of meat ready for any cannibal to swallow. *a* your *mind* that they want you to surrender—all those who *the* creed of sacrifice: whatever their tag or their motives, *r* they demand it for the sake of your soul or of your body, *r* they promise you another life in heaven or a full stomach *e* earth. Those who start by saying: It is selfish to pursue

pendent mind that recognizes no authority higher than its own  
no value higher than its judgment of truth. You are asked to  
sacrifice your intellectual integrity, your logic, your reason, your  
pursuit of truth—in favor of becoming a prostitute whose  
virtue is the greatest good for the greatest number.

"If you search your code for guidance, for an answer to the  
question: What is the good?—the only answer you will find is  
*the good of others*. The good is whatever others wish, whatever  
they feel they wish, or whatever you feel they ought to wish.  
'The good of others' is a magic formula that transforms anything  
into gold, a formula to be recited as a guarantee of moral  
purity and as a fumigator for any action, even the slaughter of a coolie.  
Your standard of virtue is not an object, not an act, not a principle,  
but an *intention*. You need no proof, no reasons, no success,  
need not achieve in fact the good of others—all you need to  
do is that your motive was the good of others, *not* your own.  
The only definition of the good is a negation: the good is the 'not  
for me'.

wish it is good, if the motive of your action is *your* welfare,  
do it, if the motive is the welfare of others, then anything goes.

"As this double-pointed, double-standard morality splits  
half, so it splits mankind into two enemy camps: one is you,  
the other is all the rest of humanity. You are the only outcast with  
no right to wish or live. You are the only servant, the rest are  
masters, you are the only giver, the rest are the takers, you are  
an eternal debtor, the rest are the creditors never to be paid off.  
You must not question their right to your sacrifice, or the nature of  
their wishes and their needs: their right is conferred upon them  
negatively by the fact that they are 'non-you'.

For those of you who might ask questions, your code provides  
no consolation prize and no booby-trap: it is for your own happiness  
that you must serve the happiness of others, the only way to  
achieve your joy is to give it up to others, the only way to  
your prosperity is to surrender your wealth to others, the only  
way to protect your life is to protect all men except yourself—  
if you find no joy in this procedure, it is your own fault. No  
proof.

in pre

such:

"Ye

dare not ask the questions. But you know the unspoken rule  
refusing to acknowledge what you see, what hidden premise  
governs your world. You know it, not in honest statement, but as a  
uneasiness within you, while you flounder between guiltily  
and grudgingly practicing a principle too vicious to

"I, who do not accept the unearned, neither in  
guilt, am here to ask the questions you evaded. What

be happiness of others, but not your own? If enjoyment is a  
why is it moral when experienced by others, but immoral  
experienced by you? If the sensation of eating a cake is a  
why is it an immoral indulgence in your stomach, but a moral  
or you to achieve in the stomach of others? Why is it im-  
for you to desire, but moral for others to do so? Why is it  
it to produce a value and keep it, but moral to give it away?  
it is not moral for you to keep a value, why is it moral for  
to accept it? If you are selfless and virtuous when you give it,  
ey not selfish and vicious when they take it? Does virtue  
of serving vice? Is the — — — — —

immoral for them to accept it, provided they are unable to  
it, unable to deserve it, unable to give you any value in  
It is not immoral for them to enjoy it, provided they do not  
it by right

is the secret core of your creed, the other half of your  
standard it is immoral to live by your own effort, but moral  
by the effort of others—it is immoral to consume your own  
it, but moral to consume the products of others—it is im-  
to earn, but moral to mooch—it is the parasites who are the  
justification for the existence of the producers but the ex-  
of the parasites is an end in itself—it is evil to profit by  
ment, but good to profit by sacrifice—it is evil to create  
own happiness, but good to enjoy it at the price of the blood  
of others.

the eaters and the eaten. What standard is  
taste? What passkey admits you to the moral elite? The pass-  
lack of value  
whatever the  
upon those  
to rewards  
your value

if you fail,  
ture is just of  
your misfor-  
fortune that  
you a right to rewards. It is pain, regardless of its nature or  
pain as a primary absolute, that gives you a mortgage on all  
existence  
your

is a trade not alms, a payment, not a sacrifice. The *deserved* in the selfish, commercial realm of mutual profit, it is *undeserved* that calls for that moral transaction which costs profit to one at the price of disaster to the other. To demand re- for your virtue is selfish and immoral, it is your *lack of virtue* transforms your demand into a moral right.

"A morality that holds *need* as a claim, holds emptiness—existence—as its standard of value, it rewards an *absence* a d- weakness, inability, incompetence, suffering, disease, disaster lack, the fault, the flaw—the zero

Who provides the account to pay these claims? Those wh- cursed for being non zeros each to the extent of his dis- from that ideal. Since all values are the product of virtues the gree of your virtue is used as the measure of your penalty, degree of your faults is used as the measure of your gain. code declares that the rational man must sacrifice himself to irrational, the independent man to parasites, the honest man to dishonest, the man of justice to the unjust, the productive man to thieving loafers, the man of integrity to compromising knaves, man of self-esteem to sniveling neurotics. Do you wonder a meanness of soul in those you see around you? The man achieves these virtues will not accept your moral code, the who accepts your moral code will not achieve these virtues.

Under a morality of sacrifice, the first value you sacri- morality, the next is self-esteem. When need is the standard, man is both victim and parasite. As a victim, he must lab- fill the needs of others, leaving himself in the position of a site whose needs must be filled by others. He cannot approach fellow men except in one of two disgraceful roles: he is a beggar and a sucker.

'You fear the man who has a dollar less than you, that is rightfully his, he makes you feel like a moral defrauder. hate the man who has a dollar more than you, that dollar is fully yours, he makes you feel that you are morally defra- The man below is a source of your guilt, the man above is a s- of your frustration. You do not know what to surrender or de- when to give and when to grab, what pleasure in life is right yours and what debt is still unpaid to others—you struggle to e- as 'theory,' the knowledge that by the moral standard you've cepted you are guilty every moment of your life, there is mouthful of food you swallow that is not needed by someone where on earth—and you give up the problem in blind resentment you conclude that moral perfection is not to be achieved o-

corrupt than the corruption it purports to justify. The motive or sacrifice, it tells you, should be love—the love you ought for every man. A morality that professes the belief that the of the spirit are more precious than matter, a morality that you to scorn a whore who gives her body indiscriminately men—this same morality demands that you surrender your promiscuous love for all comers.

there can be no causeless wealth, so there can be no causeless

... and that paper money is as valuable as gold. serve that he does not expect you to feel a causeless fear. his kind get into power, they are expert at contriving means or, at giving you ample cause to feel the fear by which they to rule you. But when it comes to love, the highest of emo- you permit them to shriek at you accusingly that you are a delinquent. you're incapable of feeling causeless love. When feels fear without reason, you call him to the attention of a trust, you are not so careful to protect the meaning, the and the dignity of love.

ve is the expression of one's values, the greatest reward you for the moral qualities you have achieved in your character. eron, the emotional price paid by one man for the joy he as from the virtues of another. Your morality demands that voice your love from values and hand it down to any vagrant. response. his worth, but as response to his need, not as d, but as alms, not as a payment for virtues, but as a blank on vices. Your morality tells you that the purpose of love is you free of the bonds of morality, that love is superior to judgment, that true love transcends, forgives and survives manner of evil in its object, and the greater the love the the depravity it permits to the loved. To love a man for his is a paltry and human, it tells you to love him for his flaws me. To love those who are worthy of it is self interest to love worthy is sacrifice. You owe your love to those who don't ve it, and the less they deserve it, the more love you owe the more loathsome the object, the nobler your love—the unfastidious your love, the greater your virtue—and if you can your soul to the state of a dump heap that welcomes anything equal terms, if you can cease to value moral values you have ved the state of moral perfection. uch is your morality of sacrifice and such are the twin ideals trs to refashion the life of your body in the image of a dump yards, and the life of your spirit in the image of a dump uch was your goal—and you've reached it. Why do you now complaints about man's impotence and the futility of human ations? Because you were unable to prosper by seeking destruc- Because you were unable to find joy by worshipping pain?



Because you were unable to live by holding death as your standard of value?

The degree of your ability to live was the degree to which you broke your moral code yet you believe that those who practice it are friends of humanity you damn yourself and dare not question their motives or their goals Take a look at them now when you face your last choice—and if you choose to perish do so with knowledge of how cheaply how small an enemy has claimed your life

The mystics of both schools who preach the creed of sacrifice are germs that attack you through a single sore your fear of relying on your mind They tell you that they possess a mode of knowledge higher than the mind a mode of consciousness superior to reason—like a special pull with some bureaucrat of the universe who gives them secret tips withheld from others The mystics of spirit declare that they possess an extra sense you lack this special sixth sense consists of contradicting the whole of your knowledge of your five The mystics of muscle do not bother to assert any claim to extrasensory perception they merely declare that your senses are not valid and that their wisdom consists of perceiving your blindness by some manner of unspecified means Both kinds demand that you invalidate your own consciousness and surrender yourself into their power They offer you as proof of their superior knowledge the fact that they assert the opposite of everything you know and as proof of their superior ability to deal with it

on which consists of denying dimensions The mystics of mind call it the future which consists of denying the present To exist is to possess identity What identity are they able to give to the superior realm? They keep telling you what it is not but never tell you what it is All their identifications consist of negating God is that which no human mind can know they say—and proceed to demand that you consider it knowledge—God is non man, heaven is non earth soul is non body virtue is non profit, A is non A, perfection is non-sensory knowledge is non reason. Their definitions are not acts of defining but of wiping out.

"It is only the metaphysics of a leech that would cling to the life of a universe where a zero is a standard of identification. A leech would want to seek escape from the necessity to name its own nature—escape from the necessity to know that the substance of which it builds its private universe is blood

"What is the nature of that superior world to which they refuse the world that exists? The mystics of spirit curse matter the mystics of muscle curse profit The first wish men to profit by renouncing the earth the second wish men to inherit the earth by renouncing all profit. Their non material non profit worlds where rivers run with milk and coffee where wine spurts at their command where pastry drops on them for

...  
"You must ■ the whole of their shabby secret ■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
in esoteric philosophies, of all their dialectics and super-senses,  
their evasive eyes and snarling words, the secret for which they  
destroy civilization, language, industries and lives the secret for  
which they pierce their own eyes and eardrums grind out their  
teeth, blank out their minds, the purpose for which they dissolve  
the absolutes of reason, logic, matter existence reality—is to erect  
on that plastic fog a single holy absolute their *Wish*

"The restriction they seek to escape is the law of identity The  
freedom they seek is freedom from the fact that an A will remain  
an A, no matter what their tears or tantrums—that a river will not  
turn them milk, no matter what their hunger—that water will not  
uphold no matter what comforts they could gain if it did and  
they want to lift it to the roof of a skyscraper they must do it  
by a process of thought and labor in which the nature of an inch of  
pe line counts, but their feelings do not—that their feelings are  
impotent to alter the course of a single speck of dust in space or  
the nature of any action they have committed

"Those who tell you that man is unable to perceive a reality un-  
distorted by his senses, mean that they are unwilling to perceive a  
reality undistorted by their feelings Things as they are are things  
as perceived by your mind divorce them from reason and they  
become 'things as perceived by your wishes'

"There ■ no honest revolt against reason—and when you ac-  
cept any part of their creed your motive is to get away with some-  
thing your reason would not permit you to attempt The freedom  
you seek is freedom from the fact that if you stole your wealth,  
you are a scoundrel no matter how much you give to charity or how  
many prayers you recite—that if you sleep with sluts you're not a  
worthy husband, no matter how anxiously you feel that you love  
your wife next morning—that you are an entity not a series of  
random pieces scattered through a universe where nothing sticks  
and nothing commits you to anything the waverie of a child's  
nightmare where identities switch and swim where the rotter and  
the hero are interchangeable parts arbitrarily assumed at will—that  
you are a man—that you are an entity—that you are

"No matter how eagerly you claim that the goal of your mystic  
wishing ■ a higher mode of life, the rebellion against identity is  
the wish for non-existence The desire not to be anything is the  
are not to be

"Your teachers, the mystics of both schools, have ..

causality in their consciousness, then strive to reverse it in existence. They take their emotions as a cause, and their mind as an effect. They make their emotions their tool for perceiving existence. They hold their desires as an irreducible primary, as a fact preceding all facts. An honest man does not desire until he has identified the object of his desire. He says "It is, therefore I want it." They say "I want it therefore it is."

"They want to cheat the axiom of existence and consciousness: they want their consciousness to be an instrument not of perceiving but of creating existence and existence to be not the object but the subject of their consciousness—they want to be that God created in their image and likeness, who creates a universe out of a void by means of an arbitrary whim. But reality is not to be cheated. What they achieve is the opposite of their desire: they want an omnipotent power over existence, instead they lose the power of their consciousness. By refusing to know, they condemn themselves to the horror of a perpetual unknown."

"Those irrational wishes that draw you into their creed, those emotions you worship as an idol on whose altar you sacrifice reason, earth, that dark, incoherent passion within you, which you take as the voice of God or of your glands is nothing more than a corpse of your mind. An emotion that clashes with your reason, an emotion that you cannot explain or control, is only the expression of that stale thinking which you forbade your mind to revise."

"Whenever you committed the evil of refusing to think and to act of exempting from the absolute of reality some one small wish of yours, whenever you chose to say 'Let me withdraw from the judgment of reason the cookies I stole, or the existence of God, let me have my one irrational whim and I will be a man of reason about all else—that was the act of subverting your consciousness, the act of corrupting your mind. Your mind then became a jury who takes orders from a secret underworld, whose verdict distorts the evidence to fit an absolute it dares not touch—and a censored reality is the result: a splintered reality where the things you chose to see are floating among the chasms of those things you didn't, held together by that embalming fluid of the mind which is an emotion exempted from thought."

"The links you strive to drown are causal connections. Your enemy you seek to defeat is the law of causality: it permits you no miracles. The law of causality is the law of identity applied to action. All actions are caused by entities. The nature of an action is caused and determined by the nature of the entities that act: a thing cannot act in contradiction to its nature. An action not caused by an entity would be caused by a zero, which would mean a zero controlling a thing: a non-entity controlling an entity, the nonexistent ruling the existent—which is the universe of your teachers' desire: the cause of their doctrines of causeless action, the reason for their revolt against reason, the goal of their morality, their politics, their economics: the ideal they strive for: the reign of the zero."

"The law of identity does not permit you to have your cake and eat it too. The law of causality does not permit you to eat your cake

blanks of  
you don't  
your cake

... you give you justice, the cause—you plead  
for mercy, mercy, not justice, as if an unearned forgiveness could  
wipe out the cause of your plea. And to indulge your ugly little  
hans, you support the doctrines of your teachers, while they run  
log wild proclaiming that spending, the effect, creates riches, the  
cause, that machinery, the effect, creates intelligence, the cause, that  
your sexual desires, the effect, create your philosophical values, the  
cause.

"Who pays for the orgy? Who causes the causeless? Who are the  
accused, condemned — remain unacknowledged and to perish in  
silence, lest their agony disturb your pretense that they do not  
exist? We are, we, the men of the mind.

"We are the cause of all the values that you covet we who per-  
form the process of thinking, which is the process of defining  
identity and discovery — — — — — life is not for you to know,  
to speak

were it  
it even  
clothes

invented, the money that had not been devised, as exchange for  
goods that did not exist, the admiration that had not been experi-  
enced for men who had achieved nothing the love that belongs and  
remains only to those who preserve their capacity to think, to  
choose, to value

"You—who leap like a savage out of the jungle of your feelings  
onto the Fifth Avenue of our New York and proclaim that you want  
to keep the electric lights, but to destroy the generators—it is our  
wealth that you use while destroying us it is our values that you  
use while damning us, it is our language that you use while deny-  
ing the mind

"Just as your mystics of spirit invented their heaven in the image  
of our earth, omitting our existence, and promised you rewards  
created by miracle out of non matter—so your modern mystics of  
science omit our existence and promise you a heaven where matter  
happens itself of its own causeless will into all the rewards desired  
by your non mind

"For centuries, the mystics of spirit had existed by running  
rotection racket—by making life on earth unbearable, then

ing you for consolation and relief, by forbidding all the virtues that make existence possible, then riding on the shoulders of your guilt, by declaring production and joy to be sins, then collecting blackmail from the sinners. We, the men of the mind were the unnamed victims of their creed, we who were willing to break the moral code and to bear damnation for the sin of reason—we who thought and acted, while they wished and prayed—we who were moral outcasts, we who were bootleggers of life when life was held to be a crime—while they basked in moral glory for the virtue of surpassing material greed and of distributing in selfless charity the material goods produced by—blank-out.

Now we are chained and commanded to produce by savages who do not grant us even the identification of sinners—by savages who proclaim that we do not exist, then threaten to deprive us of the life we don't possess, if we fail to provide them with the goods we don't produce. Now we are expected to continue running railroad and to know the minute when a train will arrive after crossing the span of a continent, we are expected to continue running steel mill and to know the molecular structure of every drop of metal in the cables of your bridges and in the body of the airplanes that support you in mid air—while the tribes of your grotesque little mystic muscle fight over the carcass of our world, gibbering in sound of non language that there are no principles, no absolutes, no knowledge, no mind.

Dropping below the level of a savage, who believes that the magic words he utters have the power to alter reality, they believe that reality can be altered by the power of the words they do not utter—and their magic tool is the blank-out, the pretense that nothing can come into existence past the voodoo of their refusal to identify it.

"As they feed on stolen wealth in body, so they feed on stolen concepts in mind, and proclaim that honesty consists of refusing to know that one is stealing. As they use effects while denying causes, so they use our concepts while denying the roots and the existence of the concepts they are using. As they seek, not to build but to take over industrial plants, so they seek, not to think, but to take over human thinking.

"As they proclaim that the only requirement for running a factory is the ability to turn the cranks of the machines, and blank out the question of who created the factory—so they proclaim that there are no entities, that nothing exists but motion, and blank out the fact that motion presupposes the thing which moves, that without the concept of entity, there can be no such concept as 'motion.' So they proclaim their right to consume the unearned, and blank out the question of who's to produce it—so they proclaim that there is no law of identity, that nothing exists but change, and blank out the fact that change presupposes the concepts of what changes from what and to what, that without the law of identity no such concept as 'change' is possible. As they rob an industrialist who is denying his value, so they seek to seize power over ~~non-existent~~ existence.

He denying that existence exists

"We know that we know nothing," they chatter, blanking out the fact that they are claiming knowledge—"There are no absolutes," they chatter, blanking out the fact that they are uttering an absolute—"You cannot *prove* that you exist or that you're conscious," they chatter, blanking out the fact that *proof* presupposes existence, consciousness and a complex chain of knowledge: the existence of something to know, of a consciousness able to know it, and of a knowledge that has learned to distinguish between such concepts: the proved and the unproved.

"When a savage who has not learned to speak declares that existence must be proved, he is asking you to prove it by means of existence—when he declares that your consciousness must be proved, he is asking you to prove it by means of unconsciousness—he is asking you to step into a void outside of existence and consciousness and give him proof of both—he is asking you to become one gaining knowledge about a zero

When he declares that an axiom is a matter of arbitrary choice and he doesn't choose to accept the axiom that he exists, he blanks out the fact that he has accepted it by uttering that sentence, that the only way to reject it is to shut one's mouth, expound no theories and die.

"An axiom is a statement that identifies the base of knowledge of any further statement pertaining to that knowledge, a statement necessarily contained in all others, whether any particular thinker chooses to identify it or not. An axiom is a proposition that defeats its opponents by the fact that they have to accept it and use it in the process of any attempt to deny it. Let the caveman who does not choose to accept the axiom of identity, try to present his story without using the concept of identity or any concept derived from it—let the anthropoid who does not choose to accept the existence of nouns, try to devise a language without nouns, adjectives, verbs—let the witch-doctor who does not choose to accept the validity of sensory perception, try to prove it without using the fact that it is obtained by sensory perception—let the head hunter who

\* Freedom of man's mind was needed to achieve modernization, but is not needed to maintain it. He given an arrowhead and bearing, not a permanent chair of economics. They are

"Do you think they are taking you back to dark ages? They are taking you back to darker ages than any your history has known. Their goal is not the era of pre-science, but the era of pre-language, of the concept on which man's mind, concept of an objective reality, and you will

... expect that A is A  
I at the level of a  
as the initial sea

tions and has not learned to distinguish solid objects. It is to a boy that the world appears as a blur of motion, without things that move—and the birth of his mind is the day when he grasps the streak that keeps flickering past him is his mother and the world beyond her is a curtain that the two are solid entities and neither can turn into the other, that they *are* what they are, that they *exist*. The day when he grasps that he is not a passive recipient of the sensations of any given moment, that his senses do not provide him with automatic knowledge in separate snatches independent of context but only with the material of knowledge, which his mind must learn to integrate—the day when he grasps that his senses cannot deceive him that physical objects cannot act without cause—that his organs of perception are physical and have no volition, no power to invent—absolute, but his day when he discovers the nature of the material his mind must identify the things that he perceives—is the day of his birth as a thinker and scientist.

We are the men who reach that day, you are the men who do not. . . . he is a helpless pawn at the mercy of forces beyond his control. He believes that nature is ruled by demons who possess an omnipotent power and that reality is their fluid plaything where they can turn his bowl of meal into a snake and his wife into a beetle at any moment, where the A he has never discovered can be any non-A they choose where the only knowledge he possesses is that he must not attempt to know. He can count on nothing he can only wish and he spends his life on wishing on begging his demons to grant him his wishes by the arbitrary power of their will giving them credit when they do, taking the blame when they don't, offering them sacrifices in token of his gratitude and sacrifices in token of his guilt, crawling on his belly in fear and worship of sun and moon and wind and rain and of any thug who announces himself as their spokesman provided his words are unintelligible and his mask sufficiently frightening—he wishes, begs and crawls and detaches leaving you as a record of his view of existence, the distorted monstrosities of his world.

mer . . . . .

"If you wonder by what means they propose to do it, walk into

"For centuries, the mystics of spirit have proclaimed that faith is superior to reason, but have not dared deny the existence of reason. Their heirs and product, the mystics of muscle have completed their job and achieved their dream. They proclaim that everything is faith, and call it a revolt against believing. As revolt against unproved assertions, they proclaim that nothing can be proved as facts."

"If you switch on your standard from the objective to the collective and wait for mankind to tell you what to think, you will find another switch taking place before the eyes you have renounced. You will find that your teachers become the rulers of the collective and if you then refuse to obey them protesting that they are not the whole of mankind, they will answer 'By what means do you know that we are not? Are, brother? Where did you get that old fashioned term?'"

"If you doubt that such is their purpose, observe with what passionate consistency the mystics of muscle are striving to make you forget that a concept such as 'mind' has ever existed. Observe the twists of undefined verbiage, the words with rubber mean the terms left floating in midstream by means of which to get around the recognition of the concept of 'think' you, consists of 'reflexes'."



ences,' 'urges' and 'drives'—and refuse to identify the means which they acquired that knowledge, to identify the act they performing when they tell ~~it~~ or the act you are performing ~~when~~ you listen. Words have the power to 'condition' you, they say: refuse to identify the reason why words have the power ~~to~~ ~~change~~ your—blank-out  
 a process of—  
 gaged in the a  
 to solve a pr  
 blank-out At  
 A factory is a natural resource,' like a tree, a rock or a puddle.

"The problem of production they tell you, has been solved & deserves no study or concern, the only problem left for your 'flexes' to solve ~~is~~ now the problem of distribution. Who solved the problem of production? Humanity, they answer What was the solution? The goods are here How did they get here? Someone What caused it? Nothing has causes

"They proclaim that every man born is entitled to exist with labor and, the laws of reality to the contrary notwithstanding entitled to receive his 'minimum sustenance'—his food, his cloth his shelter—with no effort on his part, as his due and his birthright To receive it—from whom? Blank-out Every man they announce owns an equal share of the technological benefits created in the world Created—by whom? Blank-out Frantic cowards who figure as defenders of industrialists now define the purpose of economics as an adjustment between the unlimited *desires* of man and the goods supplied in limited quantity' Supplied—by whom? Blank-out. Intellectual hoodlums who pose as professors shut away the thinkers of the past by declaring that their social theories were based on the impractical assumption that man was rational being—but since men are not rational, they declare, there ought to be established a system that will make it possible for them to exist while being *irrational* which means while defying reality Who will make it possible? Blank-out Any stray mediocrity rushes into print with plans to control the production of mankind—as whoever agrees or disagrees with his statistics, no one questions his right to enforce his plans by means of a gun Enforce—on whom? Blank-out. Random females with causeless incomes flitter on trip around the globe and return to deliver the message that the backward peoples of the world demand a higher standard of living Demand—of whom? Blank-out.

"And to forestall any inquiry into the cause of the difference between a jungle village and New York City, they resort to the ultimate obscenity of explaining man's industrial progress—skyscrapers cable bridges, power motors, railroad trains—by declaring that man is an animal who possesses an *instinct of tool making*"

"Did you wonder what is wrong with the world? You are now living the climax of the creed of the uncaused and unearned saviors of mystics, of spirit or muscle, are fighting one another to rule you, snarling that love is the solution

consciousness has always been their only purpose throughout ages—and power, the power to rule you by force, has always been their only lust.

From the rites of the jungle witch-doctors which distorted

the Ape men huddling on the mud floors of their hovels, in or that the devil might steal the soup they had worked eighteen years to earn—to the seedy little smiling professor who assures you your brain has no capacity to think that you have no means

to choose to submit rather than to understand to be or than to think. Faith in the supernatural begins as faith in the superiority of others. His surrender took the form of the knowing that he must hide his lack of understanding that others possess some mysterious knowledge of which he alone is deprived. Reality is whatever they want it to be, through some means forbidden to him.

From then on, afraid to think, he is left at the mercy of his stifled feelings. His feelings become his only guide, his

nant of personal identity, he clings to them with ferocious possessiveness—and whatever thinking he does is devoted to the struggle of hiding from himself that the nature of his feelings is terror.

"When a mystic declares that he *feels* the existence of a power superior to reason he feels it all right, but that power is not omniscient super spirit of the universe it is the consciousness of any passer by to whom he has surrendered his own. A mystic driven by the urge to impress to cheat to flatter to deceive, force that omnipotent consciousness of others. They are his only key to reality he feels that he cannot exist save by harnessing this mysterious power and extorting their unaccountable consent. This is his only means of perception and like a blind man who depends on the sight of a dog he feels he must leash them in order to live. To control the consciousness of others becomes his passion power lust is a weed that grows only in the vacant lot of an abandoned mind.

"Every dictator is a mystic and every mystic is a potential dictator. A mystic craves obedience from men not their agreement. He wants them to surrender their consciousness to his assertions his edicts his wishes his whims—as his consciousness is surrendered to theirs. He wants to deal with men by means of faith as force—he finds no satisfaction in their consent if he must earn it by means of facts and reason. Reason is the enemy he dreads as simultaneously considers precarious reason to him is a means of deception he *feels* that men possess some power more potent than reason—and only their causeless belief or their forced obedience can give him a sense of security a proof that he has gained control of the mystic endowment he lacked. His lust is to command not to convince conviction requires an act of independence as rests on the absolute of an objective reality. What he seeks is power over reality and over men's means of perceiving it their mind the power to interpose his will between existence and consciousness as if by agreeing to fake the reality he orders them to fake men would in fact create it.

"Just as the mystic is a parasite in matter, who expropriates the wealth created by others—just as he is a parasite in spirit, who plunders the ideas created by others—so he falls below the level of a lunatic who creates his own distortion of reality in the level of a parasite of lunacy who seeks a distortion created by others.

"There is only one state that fulfills the mystic's longing for infinity non-causality non-identity death. No matter what untelligible causes he ascribes to his incommunicable feelings, who ever rejects reality rejects existence—and the feelings that move him from then on are hatred for all the values of man's life and lust for all the evils that destroy it. A mystic relishes the spectacle of suffering, of poverty subservience and terror these give him a feeling of triumph a proof of the defeat of rational reality. But no other reality exists.

"No matter whose welfare he professes to serve be it the welfare of God or of that embodied gargoyle he describes as The People, no matter what ideal he proclaims of some sur-

atural dimension—in fact, in reality, on earth, his ideal is death.

' giving  
• ribe he  
give it  
-out in  
hat the

are innocent enough to believe that the forces let  
in your world today are moved by greed for material plunder  
the myriads scramble for spoils is only a screen to conceal from  
our mind the nature of their motive. Wealth = a means of human  
life, and they clamor for wealth in imitation of living beings, to  
attend to themselves that they desire to live. But their swinish  
indulgence in plundered luxury is not enjoyment it is escape. They  
do not want to own your fortune, they want you to lose it. They  
do not want to succeed, they want you to fail. They do not want to  
live, they want you to die, they desire nothing. They hate existence,  
and they keep running, each trying not to learn that the object of  
his hatred is himself.

"You who've never grasped the nature of evil, you who describe  
them as 'misguided idealists'—may the God you invented forgive  
us—they are the essence of evil, they those anti living objects  
to seek, by devouring the world to fill the selfless zero of their  
mind. It is not your wealth that they're after. There is a conspiracy  
against the mind, which means against life and man.

"It is a conspiracy without leader or direction and the random  
destruction of the army of one land

is the ruin of every heart.

in the mind.

It is a conspiracy of all those who seek not to live but to kill  
by with living those who seek to cut just one small corner  
of life and are drawn, by feeling to all the others who are  
cutting other corners—a conspiracy that unites by links of

all those who pursue a zero as a value—the professor who to think, takes pleasure in crippling the mind of his student; the businessman who, to protect his stagnation, takes pleasure in blunting the ability of competitors; the neurotic who, in self-loathing, takes pleasure in breaking men of self-esteem; the incompetent who takes pleasure in defeating achievement; the mediocrity who takes pleasure in demolishing greatness; the eunuch who takes pleasure in the castration of all pleasure—and all intellectual munition makers, all those who preach that the relation of virtue will transform vices into virtue. Death is the premise at the root of their theories, death is the goal of their actions in practice—and you are the last of their victims.

'We, who were the living buffers between you and the nature of your creed, are no longer . . . the effects of your chosen beliefs. We are the debts you incurred in generations behind you . . . and I am the man who has called in the loan.'

'I am the man whose existence your blank outs were intended to permit you to ignore. I am the man whom you did not want to live or to die. You did not want me to live, because you were afraid of knowing that I carried the responsibility you dropped. That your lives depended upon me, you did not want me to live because you knew it.'

'Twelve years ago, when I worked in your world, I was an inventor. I was one of a profession that came last in human history and will be first to vanish on the way back to the sub-human. I was an inventor—a man who asks 'Why?' of the universe and lets not stand between the answer and his mind.'

'Like the man who discovered the use of steam or the man who discovered the use of oil, I discovered a source of energy which was available since the birth of the globe, but which men had known how to use except as an object of worship, of terror, of legends about a thundering god. I completed the experimental model of a motor that would have made a fortune for me and those who had hired me, a motor that would have raised the efficiency of every human installation using power and would have added the gift of higher productivity to every hour you spent earning your living.'

'Then, one night at a factory meeting, I heard myself served to death by reason of my achievement. I heard three persons assert that my brain and my life were their property, that my right to exist was conditional and depended on the satisfaction of their desires. The purpose of my ability, they said, was to serve the needs of those who were less able. I had no right to live, they said, by reason of my competence for living, their right to live was unconditional, by reason of their incompetence.'

'Then I saw what was wrong with the world, I saw what destroyed men and nations and where the battle for life had to be fought. I saw that the enemy was an inverted morality—that my sanction was its only power. I saw that evil was imper-

that evil was the irrational, the blind, the anti real—and that the  
 ly weapon of its triumph was the willingness of the good to serve  
 Just as the parasites around me were proclaiming their helpless  
 pendence on my mind and were expecting me voluntarily to  
 ept a slavery they had no power to enforce, just as they were  
 inting on my self immolation to provide them with the means  
 their plan—so throughout the world and throughout mens his  
 the extortions of looting  
 countries, it is the good  
 their own destroyers who  
 e and let evil transmit to

like the poison of destruction, thus gaining for evil the power of  
 rival, and for their own values—the impotence of death I saw  
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If you want to know what you lost when I quit and when my  
 ters deserted your world—stand on an empty stretch of soil in a  
 lerness unexplored by men and ask yourself what manner of  
 rival you would achieve and how long you would last if you  
 sed to think, with no one around to teach you the motions or,  
 ou chose to think, how much your mind would be able to dis-  
 ver—ask yourself how many independent conclusions you have  
 icked in the course of your life and how much of your time was  
 int on performing the actions you learned from others—ask  
 urself whether you would be able to discover how to till the soil  
 grow your food, whether you would be able to invent a wheel,  
 lever an induction coil, a generator, an electronic tube—then  
 ide whether men of ability are exploiters who live by the fruit  
 your labor and rob you of the wealth that you produce and  
 ether you dare to believe that you possess the power to enslave  
 m. Let your women take a look at a jungle female with her  
 veiled face and pendulous breasts as she sits grinding meal in a  
 al, hour after hour, century by century—then let them ask them-  
 res whether their 'instinct of tool making' will provide them with  
 r electric refrigerators, their washing machines and vacuum  
 ists, and, if not, whether they care to destroy those who pro-  
 ed it all, but not 'by instinct.'

Take a look around you, you savages who stammer that ideas are  
 ained by men's means of production, that a machine is not the  
 duct of human thought, but a mystical power that produces  
 an thinking. You have never discovered the industrial age—ar-  
 ching to the morality of the barbarian eras when a  
 n of human subsistence was produced by the muscular

of slaves. Every mystic had always longed for slaves to protect him from the material reality he dreaded. But you, you grotesque little atavists, stare blindly at the skyscrapers and smokestacks around you and dream of enslaving the material providers who are scientists, inventors, industrialists. When you clamor for public ownership of the means of production, you are clamoring for public ownership of the mind. I have taught my strikers that the answer you deserve is only "Try and get it."

"You proclaim yourself unable to harness the forces of matter yet propose to harness the minds of men who are able to achieve the feats you cannot equal. You proclaim that you can survive without us yet propose to dictate the terms of our survival. You proclaim that you need us, yet indulge the impertinence of asserting your right to rule us by force—and expect that we, who are not afraid of that physical nature which fills you with terror, will cower at the sight of any lout who has talked you into giving him a chance to command us."

"You propose to establish a social order based on the following tenets: that you're incompetent to run your own life but competent to run the lives of others—that you're unfit to exist in freedom, but fit to become an omnipotent ruler—that you're unable to earn your living by the use of your own intelligence but able to judge politicians and to vote them into jobs of total power over arts and sciences you have never studied over achievements of which you have no knowledge over the gigantic industries where you, by your own definition of your capacity, would be unsuccessful to fill the job of assistant greaser."

It is on this stage of self-abasement where you seek to make the human mean the weakling, the fool, the rotter, the liar, the fraud, the coward, the fraud and to exile from the human race the best—the thinker, the producer, the inventor, the strong, the purposeful—the pure—as if to feel were human, but to think were not, as to fail were human but to succeed were not, as if corruption were human, but virtue were not—as if the premise of death were proper to man, but the premise of life were not.

"In order to deprive us of honor, that you may then deprive us of our wealth, you have always regarded us as slaves who deserve no moral recognition. You praise any venture that claims to be non-profit and damn the men who made the profits that make the venture possible. You regard as 'in the public interest' any proposition serving those who do not pay, but is not in the public interest to provide any services for those who do the paying. 'Public welfare' is anything given as alms to engage in trade is to injure the public. 'Public welfare' is the welfare of those who do not earn it, the welfare of those who do are entitled to no welfare. 'The public,' you, is whoever has failed to achieve any virtue or value, whoever provides the goods you require for survival."

regarded as part of the public or as part of the human race  
What black-

for help in the tone  
counting on our pity,  
taught you to count  
of our virtues in the  
-guilty of succeeding  
on damn, yet beg us

Now you want to know who is John Galt: I am the first man of  
virtue who refused to regard it as guilt. I am the first man who  
could not do penance for my virtues or let them be used as the  
ob of my destruction. I am the first man who would not

wished me to perish  
the first man who told  
y learned to deal with

as slaves, giving value for value, they would have to exist  
about me, as I would exist without them, then I would let them  
in whose is the need and whose the ability—and if human sur-  
vival is the standard, whose terms would set the way to survive  
I have done by plan and intention what had been done through-  
out history by silent default. There have always been men of intel-  
lence who went on strike, in protest and despair, but they did  
not know the meaning of their action. The man who retires from  
public life, to think, but not to share his thoughts—the man who  
chooses to spend his years in the obscurity of menial employment,  
keeping to himself the fire of his mind, never giving it form, ex-  
pression or reality, refusing to bring it into a world he despises—  
the man who is defeated by revulsion, the man who renounces  
before he has started, the man who gives up rather than give in,  
the man who functions at a fraction of his capacity, disarmed by  
longing for an ideal he has not found—they are on strike, on  
strike against unreason, on strike against your world and your  
God. But not knowing any values of their own they abandon the  
struggle to know—in the darkness of the right, and passionate with-  
out knowledge of desire, they concede to you the power of reality  
and surrender the incentives of their mind—and they perish in  
their futility, as rebels who never learned their love  
as lovers who never discovered their love  
The infamous times you call the Dark Ages were an era of in-  
telligence on strike, when men of ability went underground and  
died undiscovered, studying in secret, and died, destroying the  
few of the bravest of martyrs re-



nature to produce when the ultimate collector of their power and the final authority on truth or error was the whim of self-gilded degenerate sanctioned as superior to reason by divine right and by grace of a club. The road of human history was a string blank out over sterile stretches eroded by faith and force. Only a few brief bursts of sunlight, when the released energy of the men of the mind performed the wonders you gaped at, admired and promptly extinguished again.

But there will be no extinction, this time. The game of the mystics is up. You will perish in and by your own unreality. The men of reason will survive.

"I have called out on strike the kind of martyrs who had deserted you before. I have given them the weapon they had lacked: the knowledge of their own moral value. I have taught them that the world is ours whenever we choose to claim it, by virtue of the grace of the fact that ours is the Morality of Life. They are the victims who had produced all the wonders of humanity's better summer: they the industrialists, the conquerors of matter, had discovered the nature of their right. They had known that the power was the power. I taught them that theirs was the glory.

which pronounces a businessman immoral by reason of the fact that he keeps you alive. You who claim that you long to rise above the crude concerns of the body above the drudgery of serving mere physical needs—who is enslaved by physical needs: the Hindu who labors from sunrise to sunset at the shafts of a hand plow for a bowl of rice or the American who is driving a tractor? Who is the conqueror of physical reality: the man who sleeps on a bed of nails or the man who sleeps on an inner spring mattress? Who is the monument to the triumph of the human spirit over matter: the germ-eaten hovels on the shorelines of the Ganges or the Atlantic skyline of New York?

"Unless you learn the answers to these questions—and learn to stand at reverent attention when you face the achievements of a man's mind—you will not stay much longer on this earth which we love and will not permit you to damn. You will not sneak with the rest of your lifespan. I have foreshortened the usual code of history and have let you discover the nature of the power you had hoped to switch to the shoulders of others. It is the power of your own living power that will now be drained to provide an unearned for the worshippers and carriers of Death. Do not pretend that a malevolent reality defeated you—you were defeated.

choose whether you wish to perish for a morality you have never believed or practiced. Pause on the brink of self destruction and examine your values and your life. You had known how to take an inventory of your wealth. Now take an inventory of your mind.

"Since childhood, you have been hiding the guilty secret that you

the less you felt, the louder you proclaimed your selfless and servitude to others, in dread of ever letting them discover your own self, the self that you betrayed, the self that you kept in concealment, like a skeleton in the closet of your body. And they, so were at once your dupes and your deceivers, they listened and received their loud approval, in dread of ever letting you discover that they were harboring the same unspoken secret. Existence long you is a giant pretense, an act you all perform for one other each feeling that he is the only guilty freak, each placing

are opposites. Since childhood you must run from the terror of a choice you have never dared fully to satisfy. If the practical, whatever you must practice to exist, whatever works, succeeds, achieves your purpose, whatever brings food and joy, whatever profits you is evil—and if the good, moral, the impractical, whatever fails, destroys, frustrates, whatever

was to remove moral laws bear no relation to the job of living, except as an impediment and threat to man's existence is an amoral jungle where anything goes and nothing works. And in that fog of switching definitions which tends upon a frozen mind you have forgotten that the evils named by your creed were the virtues required for living, and I have come to believe that actual evils are the practical means of existence. Forgetting that the impractical good was self sacrifice, that the practical unchartered way to live better when they cheat you feel terror and shame. When you are diluted by guilt when you suffer, your pain is not the feeling that pain is your natural state. You do not admire you believe they are doomed to fail. You believe they are the masters of

feel disarmed when you come up against a scoundrel you believe that evil is bound to win, since the moral is the impotent, the impractical

"Morality to you is a phantom scarecrow made of duty and boredom of punishment of pain a cross breed between the first schoolteacher of your past and the tax collector of your present a scarecrow standing in a barren field, waving a stick to chase away your pleasures—and *pleasure* to you, ■ a liquor-soggy brain ■ mindless slut the stupor of a moron who stakes his cash on animal's race since pleasure cannot be moral

"If you identify your actual belief you will find ■ triple damnation—of yourself of life of virtue—in the grotesque conclusion you have reached you believe that morality is a necessary evil.

'Do you wonder why you live without dignity love without fit and die without resistance? Do you wonder why, wherever you look you see nothing but unanswerable questions, why your life is torn by impossible conflicts why you spend it straddling rational fences to evade artificial choices such as soul or body mind or heart, security or freedom, private profit or public good?

'Do you cry that you find no answers? By what means did you hope to find them? You reject your tool of perception—your mind—then complain that the universe is a mystery You discard your key then wail that all doors are locked against you. You start off in pursuit of the irrational, then damn existence for making no sense

"The fence you have been straddling for two hours—while hearing my words and seeking to escape them—is the coward's formula contained in the sentence 'But we don't have to go to extreme' The extreme you have always struggled to avoid is the recognition that reality is final that A is A and that the truth is true. A moral code impossible to practice a code that demands perfection or death has taught you to dissolve all ideas in fog, to perjure no firm definitions to regard any concept as approximate and a rule of conduct as elastic to hedge on any principle to compromise on any value to take the middle of any road By extorting your acceptance of supernatural absolutes it has forced you to reject the absolute of nature By making moral judgments impossible, it has made you incapable of rational judgment A code that forbids

who declares that there are no absolutes and believes that he escapes responsibility, is the man responsible for all the blood that is now spilled in the world Reality ■ an absolute, existence is absolute a speck of dust is an absolute and so is a human life Whether you live or die is an absolute Whether you have a piece of bread or not, is an absolute Whether you eat your bread or not

... who are half rational, half-coward, have been playing a  
con game — you've  
conned — yourself  
intimate, then evil  
ity to an unyielding  
up by scoundrels—

— you get the indecent spectacle of a cringing bargaining,  
notorious good and a self-righteously uncompromising evil. As  
you surrendered to the mystics of muscle when they told you that  
ignorance consists of claiming knowledge, so now you surrender  
to them when they shriek that immorality consists of pronouncing  
moral judgment. When they yell that it is selfish to be certain that  
you are right, you hasten to assure them that you're certain of  
nothing. When they shout that it's immoral to stand on your con-  
victions, you assure them that you have no convictions whatever.  
When the thugs of Europe's People's States snarl that you are  
guilty of intolerance, because you don't treat your desire to live  
and their desire to kill you as a difference of opinion—you cringe  
and hasten.  
When you  
How d  
and pr

"You have reached the blind alley of the treason you committed  
when you agreed that you had no right to exist. Once you believed  
it was 'only a compromise' you conceded — it was evil to live for  
yourself — of your children. Then you  
your children, but moral to  
conceded that it was selfish to  
live for your country. Now,  
es be devoured by any scum  
you concede that it is selfish  
to live for your country and that your moral duty is to live for the  
globe. A man who has no right to life, has no right to values and  
will not keep them.

"At the end of your road of successive betrayals, stripped of  
weapons of certainty, of honor, you commit your final act of  
treason and sign your petition of intellectual bankruptcy while  
the muscle mystics of the People's States proclaim that they're  
champions of reason and science, you agree and hasten to  
claim that faith is your cardinal principle, that reason is  
the side of your destroyers, but yours is the side of faith.

struggling remnants of rational honesty in the twisted, bewildered minds of your children, you declare that you can offer no rational argument to support the ideas that created this country that there is no rational justification for freedom for property, for justice for rights that they rest on a mystical insight and can be accepted only on faith that in reason and logic the enemy is right, but faith is superior to reason. You declare to your children that it is rational to loot to torture to enslave, to expropriate, to murder, but that they must resist the temptations of logic and stick to the discipline of remaining irrational—that skyscrapers, factories, radios and planes were the products of faith and mystic intuition, while famines, concentration camps and firing squads are the products of a reasonable manner of existence—that the industrial revolution was the revolt of the men of faith against that era of reason and logic which is known as the Middle Ages. Simultaneously in the same breath to the same child, you declare that the looters who rule the People's States will surpass this country in material production since they are the representatives of science, but that it is evil to be concerned with physical wealth and that one must renounce material prosperity—you declare that the looters' ideal are noble but they do not mean them while you do, that your purpose in fighting the looters is only to accomplish their aim which they cannot accomplish, but you can, and that the way to fight them is to beat them to it and give one's wealth away. Then you wonder why your children join the People's thugs or become half-crazed delinquents, you wonder why the looters' conquests keep creeping closer to your doors—and you blame it on human stupidity, declaring that the masses are impervious to reason.

"You blank out the open public spectacle of the looters' fight against the mind, and the fact that their bloodiest horrors are unleashed to punish the crime of thinking. You blank out the fact that most mystics of muscle started out as mystics of spirit, the

and vice versa—that they keep running from your colleges to the slave pens of Europe to an open collapse into the mystic muck of India seeking any refuge against reality, any form of escape from the mind

"You blank it out and cling to your hypocrisy of 'faith' in order to blank out the knowledge that the looters have a stranglehold upon you which consists of your moral code—that the looters are the final and consistent practitioners of the morality you are half-obeying half-evading—that they practice it the only way it can be practiced by turning the earth into a sacrificial furnace—that your morality forbids you to oppose them in the only way they can be opposed by refusing to become a sacrificial animal and proudly asserting your right to exist—that in order to fight them forth and with full rectitude it is your morality that

we've invested it in counterfeit securities—and now your morality is caught you in a trap where you are forced to protect your self-esteem by fighting for the creed of self-destruction. The grim stake is on you: that need of self-esteem, which you're unable to explain or to define, belongs to my morality, not yours, it's the objective token of my code, it is my proof within your own soul.

"By a feeling he has not learned to identify, but has derived from his first awareness of existence, from his discovery that he rate need of self-of volitional con-value in order to to be right to be wrong in action means danger to his life, to be wrong in person, to be put down to his world as a failure.

obtain-  
worthy  
lies that  
has no  
standard  
I mean to gauge it. And he makes his fatal error when he witches this gauge protecting his life into the service of his own destruction, when he chooses a standard contradicting existence and sets his self-esteem against reality.

"Every form of causeless self-doubt, every feeling of inferiority and secret unworthiness is, in fact, man's hidden dread of his inability to deal with existence. But the greater his terror, the more fiercely he clings to the murderous doctrines that choke him. No man can survive the moment of pronouncing himself irredeemably vile should he do it, his next moment is insanity or suicide. To escape it—if he's chosen an irrational standard—he will fake, evade, blank out, he will cheat himself of reality, of existence, of awareness of mind, and he will ultimately cheat himself of self-esteem by struggling to preserve its illusion rather than to risk discovering its lack. To fear to face an issue is to believe that the worst is true.

"It is not any crime you have ever committed that infects your soul with permanent guilt. It is none of your failures, errors or omissions that attempt to evade them—it is your very but

the superficial reasons for our 'selfishness,' weakness or ignorance, but the threat to your existence fear, because you have a weapon of survival guilt, because you know you are volitionally.

The *self* you have betrayed is your mind *self esteem* = reliance on one's power to think. The ego you seek, that essential *you* which you cannot express or define, is not your emotions inarticulate dreams but your *intellect* that judge of your supreme tribunal whom you've impeached in order to drift at the mercy of any stray shyster you describe as your 'feeling'. Then you do yourself through a self-made night in a desperate quest for nameless fire moved by some fading vision of a dawn you have seen and lost.

Observe the persistence in mankind's mythologies, of the legend about a paradise that men had once possessed the city of Atlantis or the Garden of Eden or some kingdom of perfection always behind us. The root of that legend exists not in the past of a race but in the past of every man. You still retain a sense—so firm as a memory but diffused like the pain of hopeless longing—that somewhere in the starting years of your childhood, before you had learned to submit to absorb the terror of unreason, you had doubted the value of your mind, you had known a radiant state of existence, you had known the independence of a rational consciousness facing an open universe. That is the paradise which you have lost which you seek—which is yours for the taking.

Some of you will never know who is John Galt. But those of you who have known a single moment of love for existence and pride in being its worthy lover, a moment of looking at the earth and letting your glance be its sanction, have known the state of being a man, and I—I am only the man who knew that that state is not to be betrayed. I am the man who knew what made it possible and who chose consistently to practice and to be what you had practiced and been in that one moment.

"That choice is yours to make. That choice—the dedication of one's highest potential—is made by accepting the fact that the noblest act you have ever performed is the act of your mind in the process of grasping that two and two make four.

"Whoever you are—you who are alone with my words in this moment with nothing but your honesty to help you understand—the choice is still open to be a human being, but the price is to start from scratch to stand naked in the face of reality and reversing a costly historical error to declare 'I am, therefore I think'.

"Accept the irrevocable fact that your life depends upon your mind. Admit that the whole of your struggle, your doubts, your fakes, your evasions, was a desperate quest for escape from the responsibility of a volitional consciousness—a quest for automatic knowledge for instinctive action for intuitive certainty—and while you called it a longing for the state of an angel, what you were seeking was the state of an animal. Accept, as your moral ideal, the task of becoming a man.

"Do not say that you're afraid to trust your mind because you know so little. Are you safer in surrendering to mystics and discarding the little that you know? Live and act within the limit of your mind—and keep expanding it to the limit of your life. Redeem





value yourself, which means to fight for your happiness—when you learn that *pride* is the sum of all virtues, you will learn to live like a man.

"As a basic step of self-esteem, learn to treat as the mark of cannibal any man's *demand* for your help. To demand it is to claim that your life is *his* property—and loathsome as such claim may be, there's something still more loathsome: your agreement. I ask you: is it ever proper to help another man? No—if he claims it as his right or as a moral duty that you owe him. Yes—if it is your own desire based on your own selfish pleasure in the value of his person and his struggle. Suffering as such is not a value. Only man's fight against suffering, is. If you choose to help a man who suffers, do it only on the ground of his virtues, of his fight to recover, of his rational record, or of the fact that he suffers unjustly, then your action is still a trade, and his virtue is the payment for your help. But to help a man on the ground of his need, as a claim—is . . . . . values. A man who has . . . . . on the premise of death, support his career of destruction. Be it only a penny you will miss or a kindly smile he has not earned, a tribute to a zero: treason to life and to all those who struggle to maintain it. It is of such pennies and smiles that the desolation of your world was made.

"Do not say that my morality is too hard for you to practice and that you fear it as you fear the unknown. Whatever living moments you have known were lived by the values of my code. But you stifled, negated, betrayed it. You kept sacrificing your virtues to your vices, and the best among men to the worst. Look around you: what you have done to society, you had done it first within your soul, one is the image of the other. This dismal wreckage, which is now your world, is the physical form of the treason you committed to your values, to your friends, to your defenders, to your future, to your country, to yourself.

"We—whom you are now calling, but who will not answer any longer—we had lived among you, but you failed to know us. You refused to think and to see what we were. You failed to recognize the motor I invented—and it became, in *your* world, a pile of dead scrap. You failed to recognize the hero in your soul—and you failed to know me when I passed you in the street. When you cried in despair for the unattainable spirit which you felt had deserted your world, you gave it my name, but what you were calling was your own betrayed self-esteem. You will not recover one without the other.

"When you failed to give recognition to man's mind and attempted to rule human beings by force—those who submitted had no mind to surrender, those who had, were men who don't submit. That the man of productive genius assumed in *your* world the disguise of a playboy and became a destroyer of wealth, choosing to sacrifice his fortune rather than surrender it to guns. Thus the thinker

man of reason assumed in your world the role of a pirate, to end his values by force against your force rather than submit the rule of brutality Do you hear me, Francesco d'Anconia and poor Danneskjöld my first friends, my fellow fighters, my low outcasts in whose name and honor I speak?

It was the three of us who started what I am now completing. It was the three of us who resolved to avenge this country and to save its imprisoned soul This greatest of countries was built on

a. This country—the product of reason—could not survive on the reality of sacrifice It was not built by men who sought self isolation or by men who sought handouts It could not stand on mystic split that divorced man's soul from his body It could live by the mystic doctrine that damned this earth as evil and as who succeeded on earth as depraved From its start this story was a threat to the ancient rule of mystics In the brilliant self-explosion of its youth this country displayed to an incredulous world what happiness was America or mysticism. I infect you with the giant in body with a

living angel in place of its soul where its living soul was an underground to labor and feed you in silence unnamed honored negated its soul and here the industrialist Do you hear me now, Hank Rearden the greatest of the victims I have aged?

Neither he nor the rest of us will return until the road is clear to rebuild this country—until the wreckage of the morality of this age has been wiped out of our way A country's political system is based on its code of morality We will rebuild America's system on the moral premise which had been its foundation but which you treated as a guilty underground in your frantic evasion the conflict between that premise and your mystic morality premise that man is an end in himself not the means to the ends of others that man's life his freedom his happiness are his inalienable right

You who've lost the concept of a right you who swing in silent evasiveness between the claim that rights are a gift of a supernatural gift to be taken on faith or the claim that rights are a gift of society to be broken at its arbitrary whim—rights are a gift of society to be broken at its arbitrary whim—source of man's rights is not divine law or congressional law the law of identity A is A—and Man is Man Rights are the laws of existence required by man's nature for his proper

to negate man's rights is *wrong* which means is evil which means anti life

*Rights* are a moral concept—and morality is a matter of choice. Men are free not to choose man's survival as the standard of morals and their laws but not free to escape from the fact that the alternative is a cannibal society which exists for a while devouring its best and collapses like a cancerous body when the healthy have been eaten by the diseased, when the rational have been consumed by the irrational. Such has been the fate of societies in history but you've evaded the knowledge of the fact. I am here to state that the agent of retribution was the law of identity which you cannot escape. Just as man cannot live by the means of the irrational so two men cannot or two thousand two billion. Just as man can't succeed by defying reality so a man can't, or a country or a globe. A is A. The rest is a matter of time provided by the generosity of victims.

Just as man can't exist without his body so no rights can exist without the right to translate one's rights into reality—to think, work and to keep the results—which means the right of property. The modern mystics of muscle who offer you the fraudulent alternative of human rights versus property rights as if rights could exist without the other are making a last, grotesque attempt to revive the doctrine of soul versus body. Only a ghost can exist without material property only a slave can work with no right to the product of his effort. The doctrine that human rights are superior to property rights simply means that some human beings have the right to make property out of others since the competent have nothing to gain from the incompetent it means the right of the incompetent to own their betters and to use them as productive cattle. Whoever regards this as human and right has no right to the title of human.

"The source of property rights is the law of causality. All property and all forms of wealth are produced by man's mind and labor. As you cannot have effects without causes so you cannot have wealth without its source without intelligence. You cannot force intelligence to work those who are able to think will work under compulsion those who will, won't produce much more than the price of the whip needed to keep them enslaved. You cannot obtain the products of a mind except on the owner's terms by trade and by volitional consent. Any other policy of men toward man's property is the policy of criminals no matter what the numbers. Criminals are savages who play it short range and win when their prey runs out—just as you're starving today you've believed that crime could be practical if your government declared robbery was legal and resistance to robbery illegal.

The only proper purpose of a government is to protect man's life, which means to protect him from physical violence. A proper government is only a policeman, acting as an agent of his self-defense, and, as such, may resort to force only against those who start the use of force. The only proper functions of a government are the police, to protect you from criminals, the army, to protect you from foreign invaders; and the courts, to protect your property and contracts from breach or fraud by others, settle disputes by rational rules, according to *objective* law. But a government that initiates the employment of force against men who had forced no one, the employment of armed compulsion against unarmed victims, is a nightmare infernal machine designed to annihilate morality: such a government reverses its only moral function, and turns it to the role of a policeman, to the role of violence against a government which conducts you as your gang.

... on such a scale as to give his fellow men a blank check on his life and his mind, to accept the belief that others have the right to dispose of his person at their whim, that the will of the majority is omnipotent—that the will of muscles and numbers is a law. We, the men of the mind, slaves, do not deal in blank checks or work with any form of

... as men, in the era of savagery had no concept of objective reality and believed that physical nature was ruled by the whim of unknowable demons—no thought, no science, no production were possible. Only when men discovered that nature was a predictable absolute were they able to rely on their knowledge, to choose their course, to plan their future and slowly, to rise from the cave. Now you have placed modern industry, with its ... of ... any ... vest ... ices ... rms ... a harvest. But you expect industrialists to undertake ninety-decades, invest in terms of generations and produce, not five-year contracts—to continue to function and produce, not to swing what random caprice in the skull of what random official might descend upon them at what moment to demolish the whole of their effort. Drifters and physical laborers live and plan by the day of a day. The better the mind the longer the range. A man might continue to build on your ... I run. A man who can give ten years of his life to a new product, when he

that gangs of entrenched mediocrity are juggling the laws against him to tie him, restrict him and force him to fail but should fight them and struggle and succeed, they will seize his reward and his invention.

"Look past the range of the moment, you who cry that you to compete with men of superior intelligence that their skill is a threat to your livelihood that the strong leave no chance to the weak in a market of voluntary trade. What determines the material value of your work? Nothing but the productive effort of the best mind—if you lived on a desert island. The less efficient the use of your brain the less your physical labor would bring you and you could spend your life on a single routine collecting a precarious harvest or hunting with bow and arrows, unable to think any further. But when you live in a rational society where men are free to trade you receive an incalculable bonus. The material value of your work is determined not only by your effort but by the effort of the best productive minds who exist in the world around you.

"When you work in a modern factory you are paid, not only for your labor but for all the productive genius which has made the factory possible: for the work of the industrialist who built it, for the work of the investor who saved the money to risk on the untried and the new, for the work of the engineer who designed the machines of which you are pushing the levers, for the work of the inventor who created the product which you spend your time making, for the work of the scientist who discovered the laws that went into the making of that product, for the work of the philosopher who taught men how to think and whom you spend your time denouncing.

"The machine, the frozen form of a living intelligence, is the power that expands the potential of your life by raising the productivity of your time. If you worked as a blacksmith in the mystic Middle Ages the whole of your earning capacity would consist of an iron bar produced by your hands in days and days of effort. How many tons of rail do you produce per day if you were for Hank Rearden? Would you dare to claim that the size of your pay check was created solely by your physical labor and that the rails were the product of your muscles? The standard of living of that blacksmith is all that your muscles are worth; the rest is a gift from Hank Rearden.

"Every man is free to rise as far as he is able or willing, but only the degree to which he thinks that determines the degree to which he'll rise. Physical labor as such can extend no further than the range of the moment. The man who does no more than physical labor consumes the material value-equivalent of his own contribution to the process of production, and leaves no further value neither for himself nor others. But the man who produces an idea in any field of rational endeavor—the man who discovers new knowledge—is the permanent benefactor of humanity. Material products can't be shared; they belong to some ultimate consumer. It is only the value of an idea that can be shared with unhindered

numbers of men, making all sharers richer at no one's sacrifice  
loss, raising the productive capacity of whatever labor they  
perform. It is the value of his own time that the strong of the  
planet transfers to the weak, letting them work on the jobs he  
discovered, while devoting his time to further discoveries. This is  
mutual trade to mutual advantage, the interests of the mind are  
not, no matter what the degree of intelligence, among men who  
are unearned

spent, the man who cre-  
percentage of his value  
what fortune he makes,  
the man who works as a  
nation, receives an enor-  
mous payment in proportion to the mental effort that his job

our judgment for the purpose of a voluntary trade is to try our  
our mind's ability to see it—  
honesty, and to deal with  
price we asked, which you  
d to call it unfair that we,  
reels and provided you with

all, but we have  
to deal with your mind, but we have  
our answer to that, was, "May you be damned!" Our answer came  
e. You are.  
"You did not care to compete in terms of intelligence—you are  
a competing in terms of brutality. You did not care to allow  
wards to be won by successful production—you are now running  
see in which rewards are won by successful plunder. You called  
trade value for value—you

one another and as we  
as a club

clutch and clubs them with it in their turn, all of them claim protestations of service to an unnamed public's unspecified. You had said that you saw no difference between economic political power, between the power of money and the power of guns—no difference between reward and punishment, no difference between purchase and plunder, no difference between pleasure and fear, no difference between life and death. You are learning the difference now.

'Some of you might plead the excuse of your ignorance, . . .

those mystics of science who profess a devotion to some sort of 'pure knowledge'—the purity consisting of their claim that a knowledge has no practical purpose on this earth—who rest their logic for inanimate matter, but believe that the subject dealing with men requires and deserves no rationality, who so money and sell their souls in exchange for a laboratory supplied by loot. And since there is no such thing as 'non practical knowledge' or any sort of 'disinterested' action, since they scorn the use of their science for the purpose and profit of life, they devote their science to the service of death to the only practical purpose it can ever have for looters—to inventing weapons of coercion and destruction. They, the intellectuals who seek escape from moral values, they are the damned on this earth: theirs is the guilt beyond forgiveness. Do you hear me, Dr Robert Stadler?

"But it is not to him that I wish to speak. I am speaking to you among you who have retained some sovereign shred of their sense unsold and unstamped '—to the order of others.' If, in the choice of the motives that have made you listen to the radio tonight, there was an honest, rational desire to learn what is wrong with the world, you are the man whom I wished to address. By the rules and terms of my code, one owes a rational statement to those whom it does concern and who're making an effort to know. Those who're making an effort to fail to understand me, are not a concern of mine.

"I am speaking to those who desire to live and to recapture the honor of their soul. Now that you know the truth about your world, stop supporting your own destroyers. The evil of the world is made possible by nothing but the sanction you give it. Withdraw your sanction. Withdraw your support. Do not try to live on your enemies' terms or to win at a game where they're setting the rules. Do not seek the favor of those who enslaved you, do not beg for alms from those who have robbed you, be it subsidies, loans or jobs, do not join their team to recoup what they've taken by helping them rob your neighbors. One cannot hope to maintain one's life by accepting bribes to condone one's destruction. Do not struggle for profit, success or security at the price of a lien on your right to exist. Such a lien is not to be paid off, the more you pay them the more they will demand, the greater the values you seek.

to achieve, the more vulnerably helpless you become. There is a system of *white blackmail* devised to bleed you, not by means of our sins, but by means of your love for existence.

"Do not attempt to rise on the looters' terms or to climb a ladder while they're holding the ropes. Do not allow their hands to touch the only power that keeps them in power—your living ambition. Be on strike—in the manner I did. Use your mind and skill in private, extend your knowledge, develop your ability, but do not share your achievements with others. Do not try to produce a fortune, with a looter riding on your back. Stay on the lowest rung of their ladder, earn no more than your barest survival. Do not take an extra penny to support the looters' state. Since you're captive, act as a captive, do not help them pretend that you're free. Be the silent, incorruptible enemy they dread. When they force you, obey—but *do not volunteer*. Never volunteer a step in their direction, or a wish, or a plea, or a purpose. Do not help a holdup man to claim that he acts as your friend and benefactor. Do not help your jailers to pretend that their jail is your natural state of existence. Do not help them to fake reality. That fake is the only thing holding off their secret terror, the terror of knowing they're about to exist, remove it and let them drown, your sanction is their life belt.

"If you find a man who is a looter, do not help him. Do not help them to pretend that you're free. Be the silent, incorruptible enemy they dread. When they force you, obey—but *do not volunteer*. Never volunteer a step in their direction, or a wish, or a plea, or a purpose. Do not help a holdup man to claim that he acts as your friend and benefactor. Do not help your jailers to pretend that their jail is your natural state of existence. Do not help them to fake reality. That fake is the only thing holding off their secret terror, the terror of knowing they're about to exist, remove it and let them drown, your sanction is their life belt.

human existence. You have no chance to win on the Morality of faith or by the code of faith and force. Raise a standard to which honest will repair. The standard of Life and Reason.

"Act as a rational being and aim at becoming a rallying point for all those who are starved for a voice of integrity—act on your rational values, whether alone in the midst of your enemies or with a few of your chosen friends, or as the founder of a modest community on the frontier of mankind's rebirth.

"When the looters' state collapses, deprived of the best of its virtues, when it falls to a level of impotent chaos like the mysticized nations of the Orient, and dissolves into starving robber gangs fighting to rob one another—when the advocates of the reality of sacrifice perish with their final ideal—then and on that day we will return.

"We will open the gates of our city to those who deserve to enter, to those who have the strength of smokestacks, pipe lines, orchards, markets and inviolate homes. We will act as the rallying center for such hidden outposts. You'll build. With the sign of the dollar as our symbol—the sign of free trade and free minds—we will move to reclaim this country once more from the impotent savages who never discovered its nature, its meaning, its splendor. Those who choose to follow us, will join us, those who don't, will not have the power to stop us, hordes of savages have never been an obstacle to men. We will raise the banner of the mind.

Then this country will once more become a sanctuary



vanishing species the rational being. The political system we build is contained in a single moral premise: no man may obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force. Every man will stand or fall live or die by his rational judgment. If he fails to use it and fails he will be his only victim. If he fears that judgment is inadequate he will not be given a gun to improve. If he chooses to correct his errors in time he will have the unstructed example of his betters for guidance in learning to think but an end will be put to the infamy of paying with one life the errors of another.

"In that world you'll be able to rise in the morning with spirit you had known in your childhood that spirit of eager adventure and certainly which comes from dealing with a rational universe. No child is afraid of nature. Your fear of men will vanish the fear that has stunted your soul the fear you acquired in your early encounters with the incomprehensible the unpredictable the contradictory the arbitrary the hidden the faked the irrational in men. You will live in a world of responsible beings who will be as consistent and reliable as facts the guarantee of their character will be a system of existence where objective reality is the standard and the judge. Your virtues will be given protection your vices and weaknesses will not. Every chance will be open to your good none will be provided for your evil. What you'll receive from men will not be alms or pity or mercy or forgiveness of sins but a single value *justice*. And when you look at men or at yourself you will feel not disgust, suspicion or guilt but a single constant *respect*.

"Such is the future you are capable of winning. It requires struggle so does any human value. All life is a purposeful struggle and your only choice is the choice of a goal. Do you wish to continue the battle of your present or do you wish to fight for a new world? Do you wish to continue a struggle that consists of clinging to precarious ledges in a sliding descent to the abyss a struggle where the hardships you endure are irreversible and the victories you win bring you closer to destruction? Or do you wish to undertake a struggle that consists of rising from ledge to ledge in a steady ascent to the top a struggle where the hardships are investments in your future and the victories bring you irreversibly closer to the world of your moral ideal and should you die without reaching full sunlight you will die on a level touched by its rays? Such is the choice before you. Let your mind and your love of existence decide.

"The last of my words will be addressed to those heroes who might still be hidden in the world those who are held prisoner not by their evasions but by their virtues and their desperate courage. My brothers in spirit, check on your virtues and on the nature of the enemies you're serving. Your destroyers hold you by means of your endurance, your generosity your innocence your love—the endurance that carries their burdens—the response to their cries of despair—the innocence that is vulnerable of their evil and gives them the benefit of every

hang to condemn them without understanding and incapable of  
 understanding such motives as theirs—the love, your love of life,  
 which makes you believe that they are men and that they love it,  
 But the world of today is the world they wanted, life is the  
 object of their hatred. Leave them to the death they worship. In  
 the name of your magnificent devotion to this earth leave them  
 to exhaust the greatness of your soul on achieving the triumph  
 over the evil of theirs. Do you hear me my love?  
 In the name of the heart within you do not sacrifice this world

Do not use your knowledge that makes you  
 have an intransigent mind and a step that travels unlimited  
 ideas. Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark in  
 the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not yet  
 not at all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish in lonely  
 frustration for the life you deserved but have never been able to  
 reach. Check your road and the nature of your battle. The world  
 is dear to you  
 "But to break in is a  
 in the animal who exists for the pleasure of one's fight for  
 the value of your person. Fight for the virtue of your pride. Fight  
 for the essence of that which is man for his sovereign rational  
 mind. Fight with the radiant certainty and the absolute rectitude of  
 knowing that yours is the Morality of Life and that yours is the  
 title for any achievement, any value any grandeur any goodness,  
 any joy that has ever existed on this earth.  
 "You will win when you are ready to pronounce the oath I have  
 taken at the start of my battle—and for those who wish to know  
 the day of my return I shall now repeat it to the hearing of the  
 world  
 "I swear—by my life and my love of it—that I will never live  
 for the sake of another man nor ask another man to live for mine"

# Chapter VIII THE EGOIST

"It wasn't real, was it?" said Mr. Thompson  
 They stood in front of the radio as the last sound of Galt's voice  
 died left them. No one had moved through the span of silence they  
 stood looking at the radio as if waiting. But the radio was now  
 only a wooden box with some knobs and a circle of cloth stretched  
 over an empty loud-speaker  
 "We seem to have heard it," said Tinky Holloway  
 "We couldn't help it," said Chick Morrison  
 Mr. Thompson was sitting on a crate. The pale oblong smear  
 the level of his elbow was the face of Wesley Mouch who was  
 seated on the floor. Far behind them like an island in the  
 midnight-darkness of the studio space the drawing room prepared

their broadcast stood deserted and fully lighted, a semicircular

"Let me out of here!" screamed a young third rate artist suddenly and to no one in particular.

Stay put!" snapped Mr Thompson.

The sound of his own order and the hiccough moan of the big immobilized somewhere in the darkness, seemed to help him refigure a familiar version of reality. His head emerged an inch or so from his shoulders.

"Who permitted it to happen?" he began in a rising voice stopped, the light came on and he was there. He was cornered. "Who?"

"We don't!"

Turning his face toward Mr Thompson, in a manner that was almost a threat "Do we?" Taggart's face was distorted, his features set shapeless. A mustache of small beads sparkled between his nose and mouth.

"Pipe down" said Mr Thompson uncertainly, drawing a little away from him.

"We don't have to believe it!" Taggart's voice had the insistent sound of an effort to maintain a trance. "Nobody's said it before! It's just one man! We don't have to believe it!"

"Take it easy," said Mr Thompson.

"Why is he so sure he's right? Who is he to go against the whole world, against everything ever said for centuries and centuries? Who is he to know? Nobody can be sure! Nobody can know what's right! There isn't any right!"

"Shut up!" yelled Mr Thompson. "What are you trying to—"

The blast that stopped him was a military march leaping suddenly forth from the radio receiver—the military march interrupted three hours ago, played by the familiar screeches of a studio record. It took them a few stunned seconds to grasp it, while the cheerful thumping chords went goose stepping through the silence sound grotesquely irrelevant, like the mirth of a half wit. The station program director was blindly obeying the absolute that no radio time was ever to be left blank.

"Tell them to cut it off!" screamed Wesley Mouch, leaping to his feet. "It will make the public think that we authorized that special program. You rather than me."

Thompson

Tell  
them

tal announcements, no explanations! Tell them to go on as if  
nothing had happened!"

all a dozen of Chuck Morrison's morale conditioners went

... .. I Send  
... .. Don't

... .. what it's

urgent!  
"No," screamed Eugene Lawson, "No, no, no! We can't give  
the impression that we're endorsing that speech! It's horrible,  
it's horrible!" Lawson was not in tears, but his voice had the  
quality of an adult sobbing with helpless rage.

"Who said anything about endorsing it?" snapped Mr. Thompson.

"It's horrible! It's immoral! It's selfish, heartless, ruthless! It's the  
most vicious speech ever made! It . . . it will make people demand  
happiness!"

"It's only a speech," said Mr. Thompson, not too firmly.  
"It seems to me," said Chuck Morrison, his voice tentatively  
high, "that people of nobler spiritual nature, you know what I  
mean, people of . . . of . . . well, of mystical insight"—he paused,  
wanting to be slapped, but no one moved, so he repeated  
it—"yes, of mystical insight, won't go for that speech. Logic  
everything, after all."

"The workingmen won't go for it," said Tinky Holloway, a bit  
helpfully. "He didn't sound like a friend of labor."

"The women of the country won't go for it," declared Ma  
Merritt. "It is, I believe, an established fact that women don't  
care for that stuff about the mind. Women have finer feelings. You  
can't count on the women."

"You can count on the scientists," said Dr. Simon Prichett. They  
all pressing forward, suddenly eager to speak, as if they had  
just been released. "Scientists know  
the scientists."  
recapturing a  
apt maybe of big

"No!" cried Mr. Mowen in terror. "No! Don't accuse us! Don't  
accuse us! I won't have you say it!"

"That's . . . that . . . that anybody is a friend of business!"  
said Dr. Floyd. "Let's make a fuss about that speech." Much too intellectual for the  
man. "It was too intellectual. People are too dumb to under-  
stand it."

"That's so," said Mouch hopefully. "That's so."  
"In the first place," said Dr. Ferris, encouraged, "people can't  
understand it in the first place, they don't want to."

"In the second place," said Fred Kinnan, "they don't want to  
understand it in the third place, they don't want to."

"And what do you propose to do about that?"  
"The question which all of  
was as if he had

preceding utterances had been intended to stave off. No  
answered him, but heads drew faintly deeper into shoulders;  
figures drew faintly closer to one another, like a small cluster  
the weight of the studio's empty space. The military march box  
through the silence with the inflexible gaiety of a grinning ski.  
"Turn it off!" yelled Mr. Thompson, waving at the radio.  
that damn thing off!"

Someone at the radio . . . . . rose  
rebut  
to

Mr. Thompson slammed his fist down on his knee. "Say a  
thing—" he ordered, but seeing Kinnan turn away, added, "s  
body!" There were no volunteers. "What are we to do?" he y  
knowing that the man who answered would, thereafter, be the  
in power. "What are we to do? Can't somebody tell us what to  
"I can!"

It was a woman's voice, but it had the quality of the voice  
had heard on the radio. They whirled to Dagny before she had  
to step forward from the darkness beyond the group. As she ste  
forward, her face frightened them—because it was devoid of it.

"I can," she said, addressing Mr. Thompson. "You're to give  
"Give up?" he repeated blankly.

"You're through. Don't you see that you're through? What  
do you need after what you've heard? Give up and get out of  
way. Leave men free to exist." He was looking at her, yet  
objecting nor moving. "You're still alive, you're using a human  
language, you're asking for answers, you're counting on reason.  
You're still counting on reason, God damn you! You're able  
understand. It isn't possible that you haven't understood. That  
nothing you can now pretend to hope, to want or gain or gra  
reach. There's nothing but destruction ahead, the world's and y  
own. Give up and get out."

They were listening intently, but as if they did not hear  
words, as if they were clinging blindly to a quality she was  
among them to possess—the quality of being alive. There was  
sound of exultant laughter under the angry violence of her voice.  
her face was lifted, her eyes seemed to be greeting some specter  
at an incalculable distance, so that the glowing patch on her forehead  
head did not look like the reflection of a studio spotlight, but a  
sunrise.

"You wish to live, don't you? Get out of the way, if you want  
chance. Let those who can, take over. He knows what to do. I  
don't. He is able to create the means of human survival. You are  
"Don't listen to her!"

It was so savage a cry of hatred that they drew away  
Robert Stadler, as if he had given voice to the  
them. His face looked as they feared theirs would  
privacy of darkness.

"Don't listen to her!" he cried, his eyes avoiding  
on him for a brief, level glance that beg

hushment and ended in an obituary "It's your life or his!"  
"Keep quiet, Professor" said Mr Thompson brushing him off  
th the jerk of one hand Mr Thompson's eyes were watching  
ignv as if some thought were struggling to take shape inside his  
all.

"You know the truth, all of you" she said "and so do I and so  
es every man who's heard John Galt! What else are you waiting  
? For proof? He's given it to you For facts? They're all around  
n. How many corpses do you intend to pile up before you  
ounce it—your guns, your power your controls and the whole  
your miserable altruistic creed? Give it up if you want to live  
ve it up if there's anything left in your mind that's still able to  
ht human beings to remain alive on this earth"

"But it's treason!" cried Eugene Lawson "She's talking pure  
hypo"

"Now now," said Mr Thompson. "You don't have to go to  
brutes."

"Huh?" asked Tinky Holloway

"But" "asked Chuck Morrison.  
"asked Wesley Mouch  
said Mr Thompson his  
ature Just don't you be

"... any of you. There's no harm in listening to any argu  
ent, is there?"

"That kind of argument?" asked Wesley Mouch his finger stab  
ing again and again in Dagny's direction

"Any kind" said Mr Thompson placidly "We mustn't be in  
transit."

"But it's treason, ruin disloyalty selfishness and big business  
propaganda"

"Oh, I don't know," said Mr Thompson We've got to keep an  
in mind We've got to give consideration to every one's view  
it. She might have something there *He knows what to do*  
ive got to be flexible"

"Do you mean that you're willing to quit?" gasped Mouch

"Now don't jump to conclusions" snapped Mr Thompson  
nly "If there's one thing I can't stand it's people who jump to  
elusions And another thing is every tower intellectuals who  
it in some pet theory and haven't any sense of practical reality  
a time like this we've got to be flexible above all"

He saw a look of bewilderment on all the faces around him on  
he saw a look of bewilderment on all the faces around him on  
guys and on the others though not for the same reasons He  
had rose to his feet and turned to Dagny

"Thank you Miss Taggart" he said "Thank you for speaking  
in mind That's what I want you to know—that you can trust  
and speak to me with full frankness We're not your enemies,  
a Taggart. Don't pay any attention to the boys—they're upset,  
they'll come down to earth We're not your enemies nor the  
nrys Sure we've made mistakes, we're only human but we  
ng to do our best for the people—that is I mean for everybo  
can't make snap judgments and  
a these difficult

momentous decisions on the spur of the moment, can we? I got to consider it, and mull it over, and weigh it carefully. I want you to remember that we're not *anybody's* enemies—realize that, don't you?"

"I've said everything I had to say," she answered, turning from him, with no clue to the meaning of his words and no attempt to find it.

She turned to Eddie Willers, who had watched the men at them with a look of so great an indignation that he seemed paralyzed—as if his brain were crying, "It's evil!" and could not go to any further thought. She jerked her head, indicating that he followed her obediently.

Dr. Robert Stadler waited until the door had closed after them then whirled on Mr. Thompson. "You bloody fool! Do you know what you're playing with? Don't you understand that it's life or death? That it's you or him?"

The thin tremor that ran along Mr. Thompson's lips was a look of contempt. "It's a funny way for a professor to behave. I don't think professors ever went to pieces."

"Don't you understand? Don't you see that it's one or the other?"

"And what is it that you want me to do?"

"You must kill him!"

It was the fact that Dr. Stadler had not cried it, but had said it in a flat, cold, suddenly and fully conscious voice, that brought a chill moment of silence as the whole room's answer.

"You must find him," said Dr. Stadler, his voice cracking rising once more. "You must leave no stone unturned till you find him and destroy him! If he lives, he'll destroy all of us! If he dies we can't!"

"How am I to find him?" asked Mr. Thompson, speaking slowly and carefully.

"I can tell you. I can give you a lead. Watch that Taggart woman. Set your men to watch every move she makes. She'll lead you to him, sooner or later."

"How do you know that?"

"Isn't it obvious? Isn't it sheer chance that she hasn't destroyed you long ago? Don't you have the wits to see that she's one of that kind?" He did not state what kind.

"Yeah," said Mr. Thompson thoughtfully, "yeah, that's true." He jerked his head up with a smile of satisfaction. "The professor's got something there. Put a tail on Miss Taggart," he ordered, snapping his fingers at Mouch. "Have her tailed day and night. We've got to find him."

"Yes, sir," said Mouch blankly.

"And when you find him," Dr. Stadler asked tensely, "you'll kill him?"

"Kill him, you damn fool? We need him!" cried Mr. Thompson.

Mouch waited, but no one ventured the question that was in everyone's mind, so he made the effort to utter a word to understand you, Mr. Thompson."

"Oh, you theoretical intellectuals!" said Mr. Thompson.

stration "What are you all gaping at? It's simple. Whoever he is a man of action. Besides, he's got a pressure group, he's got all the men of brains. He knows what to do. We'll find out and he'll tell us. He'll tell us what to do. He'll make things happen. He'll pull us out of the hole."

U.S. Mr. Thompson?

Sure Never mind your theories We'll make a deal with him"  
With him?"

Sure Oh, we'll have to compromise, we'll have to make a few concessions to big business, and the welfare boys won't like it, but if the hell—do you know any other way out?"

But his ideas—

Who cares about ideas?

Mr Thompson " said Mouch choking, "I I'm afraid he's  
an who's not open to a deal "

"There's no such thing," said Mr. Thompson.

A cold wind rattled the broken signs over the windows of abandoned shops, in the street outside the radio station. The city was abnormally quiet. The distant rumble of the traffic sounded more than usual and made the wind sound louder. Empty sidewalks led off into the darkness, a few lone figures stood in whisper-clusters under the rare lights.

de Willers did not speak until they were many blocks away from the station. He stopped abruptly when they reached a deserted street where the public loud speakers which no one had thought of turning off were now broadcasting a domestic comedy—the voices of a husband and wife quarreling over Junior's dates. In an empty stretch of pavement enclosed by unlighted houses. Beyond the square, a few dots of light scattered vertically to the twenty fifth floor limit of the city suggested a distant, dark form, which was the Taggart Building.

"Dagny!" he cried then lowered his voice involuntarily "Dagny," whispered, "I know him. He works there — there —"

"He kept pointing at the building with incredulous helplessness."

• "He works for Taggart Transcontinental  
know," the song said. The record was a lifeless monotone

"I know," she answered. Her voice was a lifeless monotonous  
as the lowest of track laborers.

Know

"I've talked to him. I've been talking to him for years. He used to ask questions all the time. He used to ask questions about the railroad and I—God Dagny! was I helping the railroad or was I helping to destroy it?"

both. Neither. It doesn't matter now.

both. Neither. It doesn't matter now. I could have staked my life that he loved the railroad!"

"He does."

he does."

But he's destroyed it."

15

He lightened the collar of her coat and walked on  
of wind.



"I used to talk to him," he said, after a while. "His face Dagny, didn't look like any of the others, it . . . it showed he understood so much . . . I was glad, whenever I saw there, in the cafeteria . . . I just talked . . . I don't think I know that he was asking questions . . . but he was . . . so many questions about the railroad and . . . and about you."

"Did he ever ask you what I look like, when I'm asleep?"

"Yes . . . Yes, he did . . . I'd found you once asleep in office, and when I mentioned it, he—" He stopped, as a sudden connection crashed into place in his mind.

She turned to him, in the ray of a street lamp, raising her face in full light for a silent, deliberate moment, in answer and confirmation of his thought.

He closed his eyes. "Oh God, Dagny!" he whispered.

They walked on in silence.

"He's gone by now, isn't he?" he asked. "From the Terminal, I mean."

"Eddie," she said, her voice suddenly grim, "if you value him, don't ever ask that question. You don't want them to find him, do you? Don't give them any leads. Don't ever breathe a word to anyone about having known him. Don't try to find out whether he's still working in the Terminal."

"You don't mean that he's still there?"

"I don't know. I know only that he might be."

"Now?"

"Yes."

"Still?"

"Yes. Keep quiet about it, if you don't want to destroy him."

"I think he's gone. He won't be back. I haven't seen him since."

"Since when?" she asked sharply.

"The end of May. The night when you left for Utah, remember?" He paused, as the memory of that night's encounter and the . . . He said . . . waited for his . . .

" . . . ep out of you"

" . . . It was John"

something or—"

"It was John Galt," she said with a faint, mirthless chuckle. "Don't look at the Terminal payroll. The name is still there."

"Just like that? All these years?"

"For twelve years. Just like that."

"And it's still there now?"

"Yes."

After a moment, he said, "It proves nothing. I know. The personnel office hasn't taken a single name off the payroll list since Directive 10-289. If a man quits, they give his job to a friend of their own, rather than report."

"Don't question the personnel office or anyone. Don't call attention to his name. If you or I make any inquiries about him, somebody might begin to wonder. Don't look for him. Don't make any move in his direction. And if you ever catch sight of him by chance, act as if you didn't know him."

He nodded. After a while, he said, his voice tense and low, "I wouldn't turn him over to them, not even to save the railroad."

"Eddie—"

"Yes?"

"If you ever catch sight of him, tell me."

He nodded.

Two blocks later, he asked quietly, "You're going to quit, one of these days, and vanish, aren't you?"

"Why do you say that?" It was almost a cry.

"Aren't you?"

She did not answer at once, when she did the sound of despair was present in her voice only in the form of too tight a monotone.

"Eddie, if I am to—"

"It—"

"It—"

It is I who should lose the battle by failing to wait one more moment? How can I let it go—Taggart Transcontinental, Eddie—go forever when my last effort can still keep it in existence? If I've stood things this long, I can stand them a little longer. Just a little longer. I'm not helping the looters. Nothing can help them now."

"What are they going to do?"

"I don't know. What can they do? They're finished."

"I suppose so."

"Don't you see them? They're miserable, panic-stricken rats, running for their lives."

"Does it mean anything to them?"

"What?"

"Their lives."

"They're still struggling, aren't they? But they're through and they know it."

"Have they ever acted on what they know?"

"They'll have to. They'll give up. It won't be long. And we'll be here to save whatever's left."

"Mr. Thompson wishes it to be known," said official broadcasts on the morning of November 23, "that there is no cause for alarm. We must urge the public not to draw any hasty conclusions. We must maintain our unity and our sense of responsibility."

and or of reckless  
out of many in a

atic forum of public or mass,  
1001

last night has proved, is open to all The truth, says Mr Thompson has many facets We must remain impartial"

"They're silent," wrote Chick Morrison, as a summary of a content, across the report from one of the field agents he had set out on a mission entitled Public Pulse Taking "They're silent," he wrote across the next report, then across another and another "Silence," he wrote, with a frown of uneasiness, summing up his report to Mr Thompson "People seem to be silent"

The flames that went up to the sky of a winter night and devoured a home in Wyoming were not seen by the people of Kansas who watched a trembling red glow on the prairie horizon, made by the flames that went up to devour a farm, and the glow was reflected by the windows of a street in Pennsylvania, where the twisting red tongues were reflections of the flames that went up to devour a factory Nobody mentioned, next morning, that those flames had not been set off by chance and that the owners of the three places had vanished Neighbors observed it without comment—and without astonishment. A few homes were found abandoned in random corners across the nation, some left locked, shutters and empty, others open and gutted of all movable goods—but people watched it in silence and, through the snowdrifts of untended streets in the haze of pre morning darkness, went on trudging to the jobs, a little slower than usual

Then on November 27, a speaker at a political meeting in Cleveland was beaten up and had to escape by scurrying down dark alleys His silent audience had come to sudden life when he shouted that the cause of all their troubles was their selfish concern with their own troubles

On the morning of November 29, the workers of a shoe factory in Massachusetts were astonished, on entering their workshop to find that the foreman was late But they went to their usual posts and went on with their habitual routine, pulling levers pressing buttons, feeding leather into automatic cutters, piling boxes on moving belt, wondering, as the hours went by, why they did not catch sight of the foreman, or the superintendent, or the general manager, or the company president It was noon before they discovered that the front offices of the plant were empty

"You goddamn cannibals!" screamed a woman in the midst of a crowded movie theater, breaking into sudden, hysterical sobbing and the audience showed no sign of astonishment, as if she were screaming for them all

"There is no cause for alarm," said official broadcasts on December 5 "Mr Thompson wishes it to be known that he is willing to negotiate with John Galt for the purpose of devising ways and means to achieve a speedy solution of our problems Mr Thompson urges the people to be patient We must not worry, we must not doubt, we must not lose heart"

The attendants of a hospital in Illinois showed when a man was brought in, beaten up by his younger son, who had supported him all his life the younger man's father, accusing him of selfishness and greed

ishmer  
xh

dants of a hospital in New York City showed no astonishment  
he case of a woman who came in with a fractured jaw she had  
a slapped in the face by a total stranger, who had heard her  
telling her five year-old son to give his best toy to the children  
neighbors

Jack Morrison attempted a whistle-stop tour to buttress the  
city's morale by speeches on self-sacrifice for the general wel-  
. He was stoned at the first of his stops and had to return to  
Washington.

Nobody had ever granted them the title of "the better men" or,  
using it, had paused to grasp that title's meaning, but everybody  
was, each in his own community, neighborhood, office or shop and  
in his own unidentified terms, who would be the men that would  
fail to appear at their posts on some coming morning and  
would silently vanish in search of unknown frontiers—the men  
whose faces were tighter than the faces around them, whose eyes  
were more direct, whose energy was more conscientiously enduring  
than the men who were now slipping away, one by one, from every  
corner of the country—of the country which was now like the  
remnant of what had once been regal glory, prostrated by the  
force of hemophilia, losing the best of its blood from a wound  
that would never be healed.

"But we're willing to negotiate!" yelled Mr Thompson to his  
assistants, ordering the special announcement to be repeated by all  
radio stations three times a day "We're willing to negotiate! He'll  
answer! He'll answer!"

Special listeners were ordered to keep watch day and night, at  
radio receivers tuned to every known frequency of sound, waiting  
for an answer from an unknown transmitter. There was no answer  
empty, hopeless, unfocused faces were becoming more apparent  
in the streets of the cities, but no one could read their meaning. As  
the men were escaping with their bodies into the underground of  
habited regions, so others could only save their souls and were  
slipping into the underground of their minds—and no power on  
earth could tell whether their blankly indifferent eyes were shutters  
hiding hidden treasures at the bottom of shafts no longer to be  
filled, or were merely gaping holes of the parasite's emptiness  
that had to be filled.

"Don't know what to do," said the assistant superintendent of  
oil refinery, refusing to accept the job of the superintendent  
had vanished—and the agents of the Unification Board were  
unable to tell whether he lied or not. It was only an edge of pre-  
dilection in the tone of his voice, an absence of apology or shame,  
made them wonder whether he was a rebel or a fool. It was  
strange to force the job on either  
"Give us men!" The plea began to hammer progressively louder  
at the desk of the Unification Board from all parts of a country  
stricken by unemployment, and neither the pleaders nor the  
government dared to add the dangerous words which the cry was imp-  
"Give us men of ability!" There were waiting lines years'  
of janitors, greasers, porters and bus boys, there

to apply for the jobs of executives, managers, superintendents, and engineers.

The explosions of oil refineries, the crashes of defective airplanes, the break-outs of blast furnaces, the wrecks of colliding trains, and the rumors of drunken orgies in the offices of newly created executives made the search for John Galt the task of men who

Rewards and honors were offered to applicants for managerial jobs—then to foremen—then to skilled mechanics—then to any man who would make an effort to deserve a promotion in rank, wage raises, bonuses, tax exemptions and a medal devised by Wesley Mouch to be known as 'The Order of Public Benefactors.' It

not care to live on present terms.

"Don't despair! Don't give up! John Galt will solve our problems!" said the radio voices of official broadcasts, traveling through the silence of falling snow into the silence of unheated homes.

"Don't tell them that we haven't got him!" cried Mr. Thompson to his assistants. "But for God's sake tell them to find him!" Squads of Chick Morrison's boys were assigned to the task of manufacturing rumors—half of them went spreading the story that John Galt was in Washington and in conference with government officials—while the other half went spreading the story that the government would give five hundred thousand dollars as reward for information that would help to find John Galt.

"No, not a clue," said Wesley Mouch to Mr. Thompson, summing up the reports of the special agents who had been sent to check on every man by the name of John Galt throughout the country. "They're a shabby lot. There's a John Galt who's a professor of mythology—a thirty-year-old man—a manager with a

the daytime—but at night, every hour on the hour, by a secret official order, an appeal was sent from short wave transmitters into the empty reaches of space. "Calling John Galt! . . . Calling John Galt! . . . Are you listening, John Galt? . . . We wish to negotiate. We wish to confer with you. Give us word on where you can be reached . . . Do you hear us, John Galt?" There was no answer.

The words of mythology . . .

er, it was now approaching the price of two hundred—while the printing presses of the government treasury were running a race with starvation and losing.

When the workers of a factory beat up their foreman and wrecked the machinery in a fit of despair—no action could be taken against them. Arrests were futile, the jails were full, the arresting officers winked at their prisoners and let them escape on their way to prison—men were going through the motions prescribed for the moment, with no thought of the moment to follow. No action could be taken when mobs of starving people attacked warehouses on the outskirts of cities. No action could be taken when punitive squadrons punished the people they had been sent to punish.

"Are you listening John Galt? We wish to negotiate. We might meet your terms. Are you listening?"

There were whispered rumors of covered wagons traveling by night through abandoned trails and of secret settlements armed in haste to the attacks of those whom they called the "Indians"—the attacks of any looting savages, be they homeless mobs or government agents. Lights were seen, once in a while on the distant horizon of a prairie in the hills on the ledges of mountains, where no buildings had been known to exist. But no soldiers could be per-

of crumbling  
re appeared  
the curving

dark which was the sign of the dollar

"Can you hear us, John Galt? Send us word. Name your terms. We will meet any terms you set. Can you hear us?"

There was no answer.

The shaft of red smoke that shot to the sky on the night of January 22 and stood abnormally still for a while like a solemn memorial obelisk, then wavered and swept back and forth across the sky, like a searchlight sending some undecipherable message.

it. They  
ad cursed  
—looked  
familiar

deserter  
ed to run  
a pudgy

... had been a man of the ... who had wanted nothing longer-on of the metallurgical industry going through the motions of not to follow his employees while going through the motions of siding. But at the end of a month after too many clashes with the workers too many occasions when his only answer had been that he couldn't help it, too many undelivered orders, too many home pressures from his buddies he had begged to be in some other position. The Orrean Boyle faction had been part, since Mr. Boyle had been confined to a rest home doctor had

him any contact with business

him to the job of weaving baskets — a means of occupational therapy. The second People's Manager sent to Rearden Steel had belonged to the faction of Cuffy Meigs. He had worn leather leggings and perfumed hair lotions; he had come to work with a gun on his hip; he had kept snapping that discipline was his goal and that by God he'd get it or else. The only discernible rule of the discipline had been his order forbidding all questions. After weeks of frantic activity on the part of insurance companies, of firemen of ambulances and of first aid units attending to a series of inexplicable accidents—the "People's Manager" had vanished one morning, having sold and shipped to sundry racketeers of Europe and Latin America most of the cranes, the automatic conveyors, the supplies of refractory brick, the emergency power generator and the carpet from what had once been Rearden's office.

No one had been able to untangle the issues in the violent chaos of the next few days—the issues had never been named, the sides had remained unacknowledged, but everyone had known that the bloody encounters between the older workers and the newer had not been driven to such ferocious intensity by the trivial causes that kept setting them off—neither guards nor policemen nor militia troopers had been able to keep order for the length of a day—nor could any faction muster a candidate willing to accept the post of "People's Manager." On January 22 the operations of Rearden Steel had been ordered temporarily suspended.

The shaft of red smoke that night had been caused by a sixty-year-old worker who had set fire to one of the structures and had been caught in the act, laughing dazedly and staring at the flames. "To avenge Hank Rearden!" he had cried defiantly, tears running down his furnace-tanned face.

Don't let it hurt you like this—thought Dagny slumped across her desk over the page of the newspaper where a single brief paragraph announced the "temporary" end of Rearden Steel—don't let it hurt you so much.

She kept seeing the face of Hank Rearden, as he had stood in the window of his office, watching a crane move against the sky with a load of green-blue rail.

Don't let it hurt him like this—was the plea in her mind, addressed to no one—don't let him hear of it, don't let him know.

Then she saw another face, a face with unflinching green eyes, saying to her in a voice made implacable by the quality of respect for facts: "You'll have to hear about it."

You'll hear about every wreck. You'll hear about every discontinued train. Nobody stays in this valley by faking reality in any manner whatever.

Then she sat still with no sight and no sound in her mind, with nothing but that enormous presence which was pain—until she heard the familiar cry that had become a drug, killing all sensations except the capacity to act: "Miss Taggart, we don't know what to do!"—and she shot to her feet to answer.

"The People's State of Guatemala," said the newspapers on January 26, "declines the request of the United States to loan of thousand tons of steel."

On the night of February 3 a young pilot

noise, a weekly flight from Dallas to New York City. When he reached the empty darkness beyond Philadelphia—in the place where the flames of Rearden Steel had for years been his favorite landmark, his greeting in the loneliness of night, the beacon of a living earth—he saw a snow-covered spread, dead white and phosphorescent in the starlight, a spread of peaks and craters that looked like the surface of the moon. He quit his job, next morning. Through the frozen nights over divine cities knocking in vain

"...all, we don't know what to do," said Mr. Thompson, he had summoned her to a personal conference on one of his scurrying trips to New York. "We're ready to give in, to meet his terms, to let him take over—but where is he?"

"For the third time," she said, her face and voice shut tight against any fissure of emotion, "I do not know where he is. What made you think I did?"

"Well, I didn't know, I had to try. I thought, just in case . . . I thought, maybe if you had a way to reach him—"

"I haven't."

"You see, we can't announce not even by short-wave radio that we're willing to surrender altogether. People might hear it. But if we had some way to reach him, to let him know that we're ready to give in, to scrap our policies, to do anything he tells us to—"

"I said I haven't."

"If he had—"

xxxx

xxx:

id .

xxxx: no answer?"

"You've heard his speech."

"But what are we to do? We can't just quit and leave the country without any government at all. I shudder to think what would happen. With the k— . . . on the loose—why, Miss

we'd have plunder  
now what's got into  
any more. We can't  
not run things any

"Start lifting taxes and removing controls."

"Oh, no, no, no! That's out of the question!"

"Out of whose question?"

"I mean, not at this time, Miss Taggart, not at this time. The country isn't ready for it. Personally, I'd agree with you. A freedom-loving man, Miss Taggart, I'm not after power—but emergency. People aren't ready for freedom. We've got



a strong hand We can't adopt an idealistic theory which—"

"Then don't ask me what to do" she said and rose in her  
But Miss Taggart—"

I didn't come here to argue"

She was at the door when he sighed and said I hope he's  
alive She stopped I hope they haven't done anything rash"

A moment passed before she was able to ask "Who?" and  
make it a word not a scream

He shrugged spreading his arms and letting them drop be-  
lessly I can't hold my own boys in line any longer I can't  
what they might attempt to do There's one clique—the Fer-  
Lawson Meigs faction—that's been after me for over a year to ad-  
stronger measures A tougher policy they mean Frankly what it  
mean is to resort to terror Introduce the death penalty for civil  
crimes for critics dissenters and the like Their argument is  
since people won't co-operate won't act for the public interest  
voluntarily we've got to force them to Nothing will make a  
system work they say but terror And they may be right in  
the look of things nowadays But Wesley won't go for strong-a-  
methods Wesley is a peaceful man a liberal and so am I We  
trying to keep the Ferris boys in check but You see they  
set against any surrender to John Galt They don't want us to do  
with him They don't want us to find him I wouldn't put anything  
past them If they found him first they'd—there's no telling what  
they might do That's what worries me Why doesn't he an-  
swer? Why hasn't he answered us at all? What if they've found him  
and killed him? I wouldn't know So I hoped that perhaps  
you had some way some means of knowing that he's  
alive "His voice trailed off into a question mark

The whole of her resistance against a rush of liquefying terror  
went into the effort to keep her voice as stiff as her knees so  
enough to say "I do not know" and her knees stiff enough to carry  
her out of the room

\* \*

From behind the rotted posts of what had once been a corn  
vegetable stand Dagny glanced furtively back at the street the  
lamp posts broke the street into separate islands she could see  
pawnshop in the first patch of light a saloon in the next a church  
in the farthest and black gaps between them the sidewalks were  
deserted it was hard to tell but the street seemed empty

She turned the corner with deliberately resonant steps then  
stopped abruptly to listen it was hard to tell whether the abnormal  
lightness inside her chest was the sound of her own heartbeats or  
hard to distinguish it from the sound of distant wheels and from  
the glassy rustle which was the East River somewhere close by but  
she heard no sound of human steps behind her She jerked her  
shoulders it was part-shrug part-shudder and she walked faster  
A rusty clock in some unlighted cavern coughed out the hour of  
four A.M.

The fear of being followed did not seem fully real as no fear  
could be real to her now She wondered whether the unnatural light

of her body was a state of tension or relaxation her body  
drawn so tightly that she felt as if it were reduced to a  
single attribute to the power of motion her mind seemed inac-  
sibly relaxed, like a motor set to the automatic control of an  
absolute no longer to be questioned If a naked bullet could feel  
mid flight, this is what it would feel she thought just the  
iron and the goal, nothing else She thought it vaguely distantly  
of her own person were unreal only the word "naked" seemed  
each her naked stripped of all concern but for the target

for the number "367" the number of a house on the East  
er which her mind kept repeating the number it had so long  
forbidden to consider

three-sixty seven—she thought looking for an invisible shape  
ed among the angular forms of tenements—three sixty seven  
that is where he lives if he lives at all Her calm

detachment and the confidence of her steps came from the  
tiny that this was an 'if' with which she could not exist any  
per

he had existed with it for ten days—and the nights behind her  
t a single progression that had brought her to this night as if  
momentum now driving her steps were the sound of her own

of the Terminal She  
nels she had walked for  
- shift he had once worked  
platforms and shops and

twist of abandoned tracks asking no questions of anyone  
ing no explanations of her presence She had walked with no  
e of fear or hope moved by a feeling of desperate loyalty that  
almost a feeling of pride The root of that feeling was the  
nents when she had stopped in sudden astonishment in some  
subterranean corner and had heard the words half stated in  
mind This is my railroad—as she looked at a vault vibrating  
the sound of distant wheels this is my life—as she felt the clot

that you are only to see  
to speak not to touch you when she had noticed the  
She had abandoned her search of the underground workers, following  
as wondering glances of

she uttered and, together, a stab of pride that it did not matter any longer—she had looked at the exhausted, brutalized men who did not care whether they were ordered to work or listen to meaningless sounds. She had not seen his face as they passed. "Was everyone present?" she had asked the foreman. "I guess so," he had answered indifferently.

She had loitered at the Terminal entrances, watching the men as they came to work. But there were too many entrances to choose from and no place where she could watch while remaining unseen—she had stood in the soggy twilight on a sidewalk glittering with rain, pressed to the wall of a warehouse, her coat collar raised, her cheekbones bare, raindrops falling off the brim of her hat—she had seen and known that the plane

her quest if there was no John Galt among them, it was no John Galt in the world she thought, then no danger existed—and no world.

No danger and no world, she thought—as she walked through the streets of the slums toward a house with the number "367" which was or was not his home. She wondered whether this was what one felt while awaiting a verdict of death: no fear, no anxiety, no concern, nothing but the icy detachment of light without heat, of cognition without values.

A tin can clattered from under her toes, and the sound beating too loudly and too long as if against the walls of an abandoned city. The streets seemed razed by exhaustion, not by war, as if the men inside the walls were not asleep but had collapsed. He would be home from work at this hour, she thought. He worked if he still had a home. She looked at the slums, at the crumbling plaster, the peeling paint, the faded signboards of failing shops with unwanted goods in unwashed windows, the sagging steps unsafe to climb, the clotheslines of rags and garments unfit to wear, the undone, the unattended, the given up, the incomplete, all the twisted monuments of a losing race against its enemies—"no time" and "no strength"—and she thought that this was the place where he had lived for twelve years, he who possessed such extravagant power to lighten the job of human existence.

Some memory kept struggling to reach her, then came back to her. His name was Starnesville. She felt the sensation of a shudder. But this is New York City!—she cried to herself in defense of the greatness she had loved, then she faced with unmovable austerity the verdict pronounced by her mind: a city that had left him in the slums for twelve years was damned and doomed to the future. Starnesville.

Then abruptly it ceased to matter, she felt a peculiar shock from the shock of sudden silence, a sense of stillness within her. She looked for a sense of calm, she saw the number "367" above the door of an ancient tenement.

She was calm, she thought, it was only time that had suddenly

awakened in pencil by some illiterate hand—then the moment when she stopped at the foot of a stairway, glanced up at the vanishing gleams of the railing and suddenly leaned against the wall, trembling with terror, preferring not to know—then the moment when she felt the movement of her foot coming to rest on the first of the steps—then a single, unbroken progression of lightness of rising without effort or doubt or fear, of feeling the twisting installments of the stairway dropping down beneath her unhesitant feet, as if the momentum of her irresistible rise were coming from the straightness of her body, the poise of her shoulders, the lift of her head and the solemnly exultant certainty that in the moment of ultimate vision, it was not disaster she expected of her life, at the end of the long stairway she had needed thirty-seven years to climb.

At the top, she saw a narrow hallway its walls converging to an arched door. She heard the floorboards creaking in the silence, under her steps. She felt the pressure of her finger on a doorbell and heard the sound of ringing in the unknown space beyond. She waited, she heard the brief crack of a board, but it came from the floor below. She heard the sliding wail of a tugboat somewhere on the river. In that moment she knew that she had missed some span of time, because her awareness was not like a moment of awakening, but like a moment of birth—as if two sounds were pulling her out of a void, the sound of a step behind the door and the sound of a lock being turned—but she was not present until the moment when suddenly there was no door before her and the figure standing on the threshold was John Galt standing casually in his own doorway dressed in slacks and shirt, the angle of his waistline slanting faintly into the light behind him.

He knew that his eyes were grasping this moment then sweeping it into its past and its future, that a lightning process of calculation was bringing it into his conscious control—and by the time a fold of his shirt moved with the motion of his breath, he knew the sum—and the sum was a smile of radiant greeting.

He was now unable to move. He seized her arm, he jerked her into the room, she felt the clinging pressure of his mouth, she felt the slenderness of his body through the suddenly alien stiffness of her coat. She saw the laughter in his eyes, she felt the touch of his mouth again and again, she was sagging in his arms, she was dying in gasps, as if she had not breathed for five flights of stairs, her face was pressed to the angle between his neck and shoulder, to hold him, to hold him with her arms, her hands and the skin of her cheek.

John . . . you're alive . . . " was all she could say. He nodded, as if he knew what the words were intended to

When he picked up her hat that had fallen to the floor, he

off her coat and put it aside, he looked at her slender trembling figure, a sparkle of approval in his eyes, his hand moving over tight high collared dark blue sweater that gave to her body fragility of a schoolgirl and the tension of a fighter.

"The next time I see you," he said, "wear a white one. It'll look wonderful too."

She realized that she was dressed as she never appeared in public as she had been dressed at home through the sleepless hours of the night. She laughed, rediscovering the ability to laugh she had expected his first words to be anything but that.

"If there is a next time," he added calmly.

"What do you mean?"

He went to the door and locked it. "Sit down," he said.

She remained standing, but she took the time to glance at the room she had not noticed—a long bare garret with a bed in a corner and a gas stove in another, a few pieces of wooden furniture, naked boards stressing the length of the floor, a single lamp burning on a desk, a closed door in the shadows beyond the lamp circle—and New York City beyond an enormous window, the spread of angular structures and scattered lights, and the shaft of the Empire State Building far in the distance.

"Now listen carefully," he said. "We have about half an hour. I think I know why you came here. I told you that it would be better to stand and that you would be likely to break. Don't regret it if you see?—I can't regret it, either. But now, we have to know how to act from here on. In about half an hour, the looters, agents, and

last link to me, and would not let you out of his sight—or the sight of his spies."

"I wasn't followed! I watched I—"

"You wouldn't know how to notice it. Sneaking is one art they're expert at. Whoever followed you is reporting to his bosses right now. Your presence in this district at this hour, my name on the board downstairs—the fact that I work for your railroad—it's enough even

call. Now you must take their side."

"What?"

"You must take their side as fully consistently and loudly as your capacity for deception will permit. You must act as one of

You must act as my worst enemy. If you do, I'll have a

hance to come out of it alive. They need me too much, they'll go to any extreme before they bring themselves to kill me. Whatever they extort from people, they can extort it only through their victims' values—and they have no value of mine to hold over my head, nothing to threaten me with. But if they get the slightest suspicion of what we are to each other, they will have you on a torture rack—I mean, physical torture—before my eyes, in less than a week. I'm not going to wait for that. At the first mention of a threat to you, I will kill myself and stop them right there."

He said it without emphasis, in the same impersonal tone of practical calculation as the rest. She knew that he meant it and that he was right to mean it—she saw in what manner she alone had the power to succeed at destroying him, where all the power of his

all of decent you can command, but convince them that you're me. Then we'll have a chance to remain alive and to escape—I don't know when or how, but I'll know that I'm free to act. Is this understood?"

She forced herself to lift her head, to look straight at him and nod.

"When they come," he said, "tell them that you had been trying to find me for them, that you became suspicious when you saw my name on your payroll list and that you came here to investigate."

She nodded.  
"I will stall about admitting my identity—they might recognize my voice but they won't. It'll be you who'll

... a hundred thousand-dollar reward they've offered for my capture."

She closed her eyes, then nodded.

"Dagny," he said slowly, "there is no way to serve your own desires under their system. Sooner or later, whether you intended it or not, they had to bring you to the point where the only thing I can do for me is to turn against me. Gather your strength and it—then we'll earn this one half hour and, perhaps, the future." "I'll do it," she said firmly, and added, "if that's what happens, hey—"

"It will happen. Don't regret it. I won't. You haven't seen the use of our enemies. You'll see it now. If I have to be the pawn in the demonstration that will convince you, I'm willing to be—to win you from them, once and for all. You didn't want to stay any longer? Oh, Dagny, Dagny, neither did I!"

It was the way he held her, the way he kissed her mouth

made her feel as if every step she had taken every danger she  
doubt even her treason against him, if it was treason, all of  
were giving her an exultant right to this moment. He saw the  
struggle in her face, the tension of an incredulous protest against  
herself—and she heard the sound of his voice through the strands  
of her hair pressed to his lips. Don't think of them now. Never  
think of pain or danger or enemies a moment longer than is neces-  
sary to fight them. You're here. It's our time and our life now. Don't  
struggle not to be happy. You are."

"At the risk of destroying you?" she whispered.

You won't. But—yes, even that. You don't think it's indifferent  
do you? Was it indifference that broke you and brought you here?

I— And then the violence of the truth made her pull her  
mouth down to hers then throw the words at his face. "I didn't  
care whether either one of us lived afterwards, just to see you there  
once!"

I would have been disappointed if you hadn't come."

"Do you know what it was like waiting fighting it, delaying  
one more day then one more then—"

He chuckled. "Do I?" he said softly.

Her hand dropped in a helpless gesture. She thought of his  
years. When I heard your voice on the radio," she said, "when  
I heard the greatest statement I ever heard. No, I have no right to  
tell you what I thought of it."

"Why not?"

"You think that I haven't accepted it."

"You will."

"Were you speaking from here?"

"No from the valley."

"And then you returned to New York?"

"The next morning."

"And you've been here ever since?"

"Yes."

"Have you heard the kind of appeals they're sending out to you  
every night?"

"Sure."

She glanced slowly about the room her eyes moving from the  
towers of the city in the window to the wooden rafters of his ceiling  
to the cracked plaster of his walls, to the iron posts of his bed.  
"You've been here all that time," she said. "You've lived here for  
twelve years here like this."

"Like this," he said throwing open the door at the end of the room.

She gasped. The long light flooded windowless space beyond the  
threshold enclosed in a shell of softly lustrous metal like a great  
ballroom aboard a submarine, was the most efficiently modern ball-  
room she had ever seen.

"Come in," he said grinning. "I don't have to keep secrets from  
you any longer."

It was like crossing the border into a different universe. She  
looked at the complex equipment sparkling in a bright diffuse  
light, at the mesh of glittering wires, at the blackboard chalk-

the mathematical formulas, at the long counters of objects shaped

"You wanted to know where I worked for eleven months out of the year," he said

"All this," she asked, pointing at the laboratory, "on the salary"—she pointed at the garret—of an unskilled laborer?

"Oh no! On the royalties Midas Mulligan pays me for his power-  
use, for the ray screen, for the radio transmitter and a few other  
things of that kind."

"Then why did you have to work as a track laborer?"

"Because no money earned in the valley is ever to be spent out-  
side."

"Where did you get this equipment?"

"I designed it. Andrew Stockton's foundry made it." He pointed  
at an unobtrusive object the size of a radio cabinet in a corner of  
the room. "There's the motor you wanted" and chuckled at her  
surprise at the involuntary jolt that threw her forward. "Don't bother  
buying it; you won't give it away to them now."

She was staring at the shining metal cylinders and the glistening  
tangles of wire that suggested the rusted shape resting like a sacred  
relic in a glass coffin in a vault of the Taggart Terminal.

"It supplies my own electric power for the laboratory," he said  
as one has had to wonder why a track laborer is using such ex-  
orbitant amounts of electricity.

"But if they ever found this place—"

He gave an odd, brief chuckle. "They won't."

"How long have you been—?"

She stopped this time, she did not gasp. The sight confronting her  
could not be greeted by anything except a moment of total inner  
collapse. On the wall, behind a row of machinery, she saw a picture  
cut out of a newspaper—a picture of her in slacks and shirt stand-  
ing by the side of the engine at the opening of the John Galt Line,  
her head lifted, her smile holding the context, the meaning and the  
essence of that day.

A moan was her only answer as she turned to him, but the look  
on his face matched hers in the picture.

"I was the symbol of what you wanted to destroy in the world,"

he said. "But you were my symbol of what I wanted to achieve."

He pointed at the picture. "This is how men expect to feel about  
the end of the life—"

his

at s

her,

ached by pain or fear, the reality of Halcys's death  
was the reward they had wanted fought for and won.





car that you have been found."

"Yes."

Our job is only to escort you safely to the top councils of the national leadership, where your presence is urgently needed. He paused, but got no answer. "The country's top leaders desire to confer with you—just to confer and to reach a friendly understanding."

The soldiers were finding nothing but garments and kitchen utensils, there were no letters, no books, not even a newspaper, as if the room were the habitation of an illiterate.

"Our objective is only to assist you to assume your rightful place in society, Mr. Galt. You do not seem to realize your own public value."

"I do."

"We are here only to protect you."

"Locked!" declared a soldier, banging his fist against the laboratory door.

The leader assumed an ingratiating smile. "What is behind that door, Mr. Galt?"

"Private property."

"Would you open it please?"

"No."

The leader spread his hands out in a gesture of pained helplessness. "Unfortunately, my hands are tied. Orders you know. We have to enter that room."

"Enter it."

"It's only a formality, a mere formality. There's no reason why things should not be handled amicably. Won't you please co-operate?"

"I said no."

"I'm sure you wouldn't want us to resort to any unnecessary means." He got no answer. "We have the authority to break that door down you know—but, of course we wouldn't want to do it." He waited, but got no answer. "Force that lock!" he snapped to the soldier.

Dagny glanced at Galt's face. He stood impassively, his head held level, the same the undisturbed lines of his profile. His eyes

of . . . were with

voluntary while the burglars' tools in the wood of the door went grating cautiously against the wood of the door.

The wood gave way easily and small chips fell down buds magnified by the silence into the rattle of a data



the four guards who had stood outside the door of the royal suite since five A.M., opened it at eleven A.M. to admit Mr. Thompson, and locked it again.

Mr. Thompson experienced a brief flash of uneasiness when the click of the lock cut off his escape and left him alone with the prison headlines and the radio.  
"The country since dawn  
New York!—John Galt has  
in conference with the

"How do you do," said Galt.

Mr. Thompson thudded down on a chair, the brusqueness of the movement suggesting a cheerily businesslike attitude. "Now don't go imagining that you're under arrest or some such nonsense." He pointed at the room. "This is no jail, as you can see. You can see that we'll treat you right. You're a big person—a very big person—and we know it. Just make yourself at home. Ask for anything you please. Fire any flunky that doesn't obey you. And if you take a dislike to any of the army boys outside, just breathe the word—and we'll send another one to replace him."

He paused expectantly. He received no answer.

"The only reason we brought you here is just that we wanted to talk to you. We wouldn't have done it this way, but you left us no choice. You kept hiding. And all we wanted was a chance to tell you that you got us all wrong."

He spread his hands out, palms up, with a disarming smile. Galt's eyes were watching him, without answer.

"That was some speech you made. Boy, are you an orator! You've done something to the country—I don't know what or why, but you have. People seem to want something you've got. But you thought we'd be dead set against it? That's where you're wrong. We're not. Personally, I think there was plenty in that speech that made sense. Yes, sir, I do. Of course I don't agree with every word you said—but what the hell, you don't expect us to agree with every thing, do you? Differences of opinion—that's what makes horse racing. Me. I'm always willing to change my mind. I'm open to any argument."

He leaned forward invitingly. He obtained no answer.

"The world is in a hell of a mess. Just as you said. There, I agree with you. We have a point in common. We can start from that. Somethings got to be done about it. All I wanted was—Look," he cried suddenly, "why don't you let me talk to you?"

"You are talking to me."

"I . . . well, that is . . . well, you know what I mean."

"Fully."



"That's impossible! That's fantastic! That's out of the question!"

"You see? I told you we had nothing to discuss!"

"Now wait! Wait! Don't go to extremes! There's always a middle road. You can't have everything. We aren't people aren't ready for it. You can't expect us to ditch the machinery of State—we've got to preserve the system. But we're willing to amend it. We'll modify it any way you wish. We're not stubborn, theoretical idealists—we're flexible. We'll do anything you say. We'll give you a free hand. We'll co-operate. We'll compromise. We'll split fifty-fifty. We'll keep the sphere of politics and give you total power over the sphere of economics. We'll turn the production of the country over to you—we'll make you a present of the entire economy. You'll run it any way you wish, you'll give the orders, you'll issue the directives—and you'll have the organized power of the State at your command to enforce your decisions. We'll stand ready to obey you all of us, from me on down. In the field of production, we'll do whatever you say. You'll be—you'll be the economic Dictator of the nation."

Galt burst out laughing.

It was the simple amusement of the laughter that shocked Mr. Thompson. "What's the matter with you?"

"So that's your idea of a compromise is it?"

"What's the matter? Don't sit there grinning like that! I don't think you understood me. I'm offering you *Wesley Mouch's*—and there's nothing bigger that anyone could offer you! You'll be free to do anything you wish. If you don't like controls—peel them. If you want higher profits and lower wages—decree them. If you want special privileges for the big tycoons—grant them. If you don't like labor unions—dissolve them. If you want free economy—order people to be free. Play it any way you like. But get things going. Get the country organized. Make 'em work again. Make them produce. Bring back your own men—the men of brains. Lead us to a peaceful, scientific industrial—and to prosperity."

"At the point of a gun?"

"Now look, I—Now what's so damn funny about it?"

"Will you tell me just one thing if you're able to pretend that I haven't heard a word I said on the radio what makes you think I'd be willing to pretend that I haven't said it?"

"I don't know what you mean. I—"

"Skip it. It was just a rhetorical question. The first part of it covers the second."

"Huh?"

"I don't play your kind of games, brother—if you want a transaction."

"Do you mean that you're refusing my offer?"

"I am."

"But why?"

"It took me three hours on the radio to tell you why."

"Oh, that's just theory! I'm talking business. I'm offering

the best job in the—Will you tell me what's wrong



"I can offer you anything you can ask. Just name it."

"You name it."

"Well, you talked a lot about wealth. If it's money that you want—you couldn't make in three lifetimes what I can hand over to you in a minute, this minute, cash on the barrel. Want a billion dollars—a cool, neat billion dollars?"

"Which I'll have to produce, for you'll give me?"

"No, I mean straight out of the public treasury, in fresh, new bills . . . or . . . or even in gold, if you prefer."

"What will it buy me?"

"Oh, look, when the country gets back on its feet—"

"When I put it back on its feet?"

"Well, if what you want is to run things your own way, if it's power that you're after, I'll guarantee you that every man woman and child in this country will obey your orders and do whatever you wish."

"After I teach them to do it?"

"If you want anything for your own gang—for all those men who've disappeared—jobs, positions, authority tax exemptions, any special favor at all—just name it and they'll get it."

"After I bring them back?"

"Well, what on earth do you want?"

"What on earth do I need you for?"

"Huh?"

"What have you got to offer me that I couldn't get without you?"

There was a different look in Mr. Thompson's eyes when he drew back, as if cornered, yet looked straight at Galt for the first time and said slowly, "Without me, you couldn't get out of this room, right now."

Galt smiled. "True."

"You wouldn't be able to produce anything. You could be left here to starve."

"True."

"Well, don't you see?" The loudness of homey joviality came back into Mr. Thompson's voice, as if the hint given and received were now to be safely evaded by means of humor. "What I've got to offer you is your life."

"It's not yours to offer, Mr. Thompson," said Galt softly.

Something about his voice made Mr. Thompson jerk to glance at him, then jerk faster to look away. Galt's smile seemed almost gentle.

"Now," said Galt, "do you see what I meant when I said that a . . . . . not  
th-  
not

"Who . . . who's said anything about murdering you?"

"Who's said anything about anything else? If you weren't holding me here at the point of a gun, under threat of death, wouldn't have a chance to speak to me at all. And *that* is as





"I want you to think!"

"How will your gun make me do that, Mr. Thompson?"

Mr. Thompson looked at him silently—and Galt saw, in the tensed lips, in the putting chin in the narrowed eyes, the look of an adolescent bully about to utter that philosophical argument which is expressed by the sentence "I'll bash your teeth in." Galt led, looking straight at him, as if hearing the unspoken sentence and underscoring it. Mr. Thompson looked away.

"No," said Galt, "you don't want me to think. When you force

Mr. Thompson sighed. "I don't get it," he said in a tone of helpless helplessness. "Something's off and I can't figure it out. Why would you ask for trouble? With a brain like yours—you can beat anybody. I'm no match for you, and you know it. Why don't you tend to join us, then gain control and outsmart me?"

"For the same reason that makes you offer it—because you'd win." "Right?"

"Because it's the attempt of your betters to beat you on your terms that has allowed your kind to get away with it for centuries. Not one of us would succeed, if I were to compete with you for control over your musclemen? Sure, I could pretend—and I wouldn't save your economy or your system, nothing will save them—but I'd perish and what you'd win would be what you've already won in the past—a postponement, one more stay of execution, another year—or month—bought at the price of whatever hope and effort might still be squeezed out of the best of the human animals left around you, including me. That's all you're after and it is the length of your range. A month? You'd settle for a week in the unchallenged absolute that there will always be another man to find. But you've found your last victim—the one who refuses to play his historical part. The game is up, brother."

"Oh, that's just theory!" snapped Mr. Thompson a little too sharply, his eyes were roving about the room, in the manner of a man about to escape. He glanced at the door, as if longing to escape. "Or say that if we don't give up the system, we'll perish?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then, since we're holding you, you will perish with us?"

"Possibly."

"Don't you want to live?"

"Passionately." He saw the snap of a spark in Mr. Thompson's eyes and smiled. "I'll tell you more. I know that I want to live more intensely than you do. I know that that's what you're counting on. I know that you, in fact, do not want to live at all. I want it. And because I want it so much, I will accept no substitute." Mr. Thompson jumped to his feet. "That's not true!" he cried. "I'm not wanting to live—it's not true! Why do you talk like that?" He stood, his limbs drawn tightly together, as if against a wall. "Why do you?" "I don't know what you mean. And it's not true that I'm a backed a few



ck Morrison's voice when he spoke to a circle of faces in Mr Thompson's room on the fifty ninth floor. The look of the faces checked the sound of his voice.

"It doesn't seem to work," he said pointing to a pile of reports and his public pulse takers. "All the press releases about our laboring with John Galt don't seem to make any difference. People don't care. They don't believe a word of it. Some of them say that he'll never collaborate with us. Most of them don't even care that we've got him. I don't know what's happened to people. They don't believe anything any more." He sighed. "Three fac- yesterday Five  
500—"

"... using the muffler  
is out of order  
I've no choice about it. He's got to give up and take over  
I got to."

Wesley Mouch glanced at the ceiling. "Don't ask me to talk to him again," he said and shuddered. "I've tried. One can't talk to a man."

"I can't, Mr. Thompson!" cried Chuck Morrison, in answer to the stop of Mr. Thompson's roving glance. "I'll resign, if you tell me to. I can't talk to him again! Don't make me. Nobody can talk to him," said Dr. Floyd Ferris. "It's a waste of time. He doesn't hear a word you say."

Red Kinnan chuckled. "You mean he hears too much, don't you? And what's worse, he answers it."

"Well, why don't you try it again?" snapped Mouch. "You seem to have enjoyed it. Why don't you try to persuade him?"

"I know better," said Kinnan. "Don't fool yourself, brother. No one's going to persuade him. I won't try it twice. Enjoyed  
he added with a look of astonishment. "Yeah, yeah, I  
is I did."

"What's the matter with you? Are you falling for him? Are you letting him win you over?"

"Me?" Kinnan chuckled mirthlessly. "What use would he have of me? I'll be the first one to go down the drain when he wins."

"It's only"—he glanced wistfully up at the ceiling—"it's only because he's a man who talks straight."

"He won't win," snapped Mr. Thompson. "It's out of the question."

There was a long pause. "There are hunger riots in West Virginia," said Wesley Mouch. "The farmers in Texas have—"

"Mr. Thompson," said Chuck Morrison desperately. "Maybe we could let the public see him at a mass rally or on TV just so they'd believe that we've really got him. It would give people hope for a while."

"I could give us a little time,"

"Too dangerous," snapped Dr. Ferris. "Don't let him come near the public. There's no limit to what he'll permit, to do."



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I got to." Wesley Mouch glanced at the ceiling. "Don't ask me to talk to him again," he said and shuddered. "I've tried. One can't talk to that man."

"He doesn't hear a word you say." Fred Kinnan chuckled. "You mean, he hears too much, don't you? And what's worse, he answers it." "Well, why don't you try it again?" snapped Mouch. "You seem to have enjoyed it. Why don't you try to persuade him?" "I know better," said Kinnan. "Don't fool yourself, brother. No one's going to persuade him. I won't try it twice." Enjoyed "He added with a look of astonishment. "Yeah, yeah, I said it."

"What's the matter with you? Are you falling for him? Are you trying to win him over?" "Me?" Kinnan chuckled mirthlessly. "What use would he have of me? I'll be the first one to go down the drain when he wins. It's only"—he glanced wistfully up at the ceiling—"it's only that he's a man who talks straight." "He won't win!" snapped Mr. Thompson. "It's out of the question."

There was a long pause. "There are hunger riots in West Virginia," said Wesley Mouch. "There are hunger riots in Texas, too." "Maybe," said Mr. Thompson. "Maybe Mr. Thompson," said Chick Morrison desperately. "Maybe we could let the public see him at a mass rally, or maybe we could let the public see him just so they'd believe that we've got him on TV. It would give people hope for a while. It could give us a little time." "Too dangerous," snapped Dr. Ferris. "Don't let him come near the public. There's no limit to what he'll do to do."



at Morrison's voice when he spoke to a circle of faces in Mr. Thompson's room on the fifty ninth floor. The look of the faces checked the sound of his voice.

"It doesn't seem to work," he said, pointing to a pile of reports.

Behind his throat the building's furnace had gone out of order. There's no choice about it. He's got to give in and take over. He's got to."

Wesley Mouch glanced at the ceiling. "Don't ask me to talk to him again," he said, and shuddered. "I've tried. One can't talk to that man."

"I can't," Mr. Thompson said in answer. "If you want to, you can."

"It's a waste of time," Mr. Thompson said. "He doesn't hear a word you say."

Mr. Kinnan chuckled. "You mean he hears too much, don't you? And what's worse he answers it."

"Tell me," Mr. Thompson said. "What does he say?"

"He says," Mr. Kinnan said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"Yes," Mr. Thompson said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Kinnan said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Thompson said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"What's the matter with you? Are you falling for him? Are you letting him win you over?"

"No," Mr. Kinnan chuckled mirthlessly. "What use would he have me? I'll be the first one to go down the drain when he wins."

"It's only"—he glanced wistfully up at the ceiling—"it's only that he's a man who talks straight."

"He won't win!" snapped Mr. Thompson. "It's out of the question."

There was a long pause.

"There are hunger riots in West Virginia," said Wesley Mouch. "And the farmers in Texas have—"

"Mr. Thompson," Mr. Kinnan said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Thompson said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Kinnan said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Thompson said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Kinnan said. "He says that you are a waste of time."

"He says," Mr. Thompson said. "He says that you are a waste of time."





sting silently at the closed cashier's window of a plant whose owner had vanished

"The farmers of South Dakota," Wesley Mouch reported to Mr Thompson, next morning "are marching on the state capital, burning every government building on their way, and every home worth more than ten thousand dollars"

"California's blown to pieces," he reported in the evening "there's a civil war going on there—if that's what it is, which nobody seems to be sure of They've declared that they're seceding from the Union, but nobody knows who's now in power There's mad fighting all over the state, between a 'People's Party,' led by a Chalmers and her soybean cult of Orient admirers—and something called 'Back to God,' led by some former oil field owners"

"Miss Taggart!" moaned Mr Thompson when she entered his steel room next morning, in answer to his summons. "What are we going to do?"

He wondered why he had once felt that she possessed some reasoning kind of energy He was looking at a blank face that seemed imposed but the composure became disquieting when one noticed that it lasted for minute after minute, with no chance of expression, no sign of feeling Her face had the same look as all the others he thought, except for something in the set of the mouth that suggested —

re brains than all my country than any of are we to do? With everything falling to pieces, he's the only one who can lead us out of this mess—but he won't He refuses He simply refuses to lead. I've never seen anything like it a man who has no desire to command. We beg him to give orders—and he answers that he wants to buy them! It's preposterous!"

"It is"

"What do you make of it? Can you figure him out?"

"He's an arrogant egoist," she said "He's an ambitious adventurer He's a man of unlimited audacity who's playing for the biggest stakes in the world"

It was easy, she thought It would have been difficult in that distant time when she had regarded language as a tool of honor almost any to be used as if one were under oath—an oath of allegiance

atch Mr Thompson's "glances of triumph at his assistants, 'That's my girl!' uttered with judgment in trusting her had been the triumph of a man whose judgment in trusting her had been indicated It had been easy to express an angry hatred for C — "I used to agree with his ideas, but I won't let him Thompson say, "Don't you m him"

ailroad!"—and so Taggart! We'll



what if he holds out too long?"

"He won't. He's too practical for that. By the way, are you listening him hear any news about the state of the country?"

"Why no?"

"I would suggest that you let him have copies of your confidential reports. He'll see that it won't be long now."

"That's a good idea! A very good idea! You know Miss Eggart," he said suddenly, with the sound of some desperate ringing in his voice, "I feel better whenever I talk to you. It's because I trust you. I don't trust anybody around me. But you—you're different. You're solid."

She was looking unflinchingly straight at him. "Thank you, Mr. Thompson," she said.

It had been easy, she thought—until she walked out into the street and noticed that under her coat, her blouse was sticking simply to her shoulder blades.

Were she able to feel—she thought as she walked through the entrance of the Terminal—she would know that the heavy indifference she now felt for her railroad was hatred. She could not find of the feeling that she was running nothing but freight trains—the passengers, to her, were not living or human. It seemed useless to waste such enormous effort on preventing catastrophes, protecting the safety of trains carrying nothing but inanimate objects. She looked at the faces in the Terminal if he were to die she thought to herself—work to provide help would be to live, they

delivered to her that afternoon it was delivered with a bouquet of flowers from Mr. Thompson. She looked at the check and let it flutter down to her desk—it meant nothing and made her feel nothing not even a suggestion of guilt. It was a scrap of paper of no greater significance than the ones in the office wastebasket. Whether it would buy a diamond necklace or the city dump or the last of her food, made no difference. It would never be spent. It was not a token of value and nothing it purchased could be a value. But it was—she thought—this inanimate indifference was the permanent state of the people around her of men who had no purpose and no passion. This was the state of a non-valuing soul those who chose

apartment house  
haunt—and she  
switched on the  
type that had

at in her eyes. She picked it up—and then, with  
pped under her door. She pushed soundlessly, half kneeling, half



In the casual manner of a man enjoying the motion of his own  
by Mr Thompson noted the lightness of the steps the straight  
it, the flat stomach the relaxed shoulders Galt walked as if  
were both . . . . .

... Mr Thompson saying it's not all yours we  
it want to give you orders. Take it easy Jim  
Galt ... world is collapsing said Taggart  
"People are perishing—and it's  
... matter who's right or wrong?  
think we're wrong, you should

ruice your mind to save them!"  
Try what means will I then save them?  
'Who do you think you are?' cried Taggart  
Galt stopped "You know it"  
'You're an egomaniac!'  
'I am.'

'Do you realize what sort of egomaniac you are?'  
'Do you?' asked Galt looking straight at him  
It was the slow withdrawal of Taggart's body into the depth of  
armchair, while his eyes were holding Galt's that made Mr  
Thompson unaccountably afraid of the next moment  
'Say' Mr Thompson interrupted in a brightly casual voice  
that sort of cigarette are you smoking?  
Galt turned to him and smiled 'I don't know'

'Where did you get it?'  
'One of your guards brought me a package of them. He said  
he man asked him to give it to me as a present. Don't  
try' he added your boys have put it through every kind of  
There were no hidden messages. It was just a present from an  
anonymous admirer'

The cigarette between Galt's fingers bore the sign of the dollar  
'James Taggart was no good at the job of perversion. Mr  
Thompson concluded that Chak Morrison, whom he brought the  
it day, did no better

'I'll just throw myself on your mercy Mr Galt,' said  
Chak Morrison with a frantic smile 'You're right I'll concede  
I you're right—and all I can appeal to is your pity. Deep down  
my heart'



look in the mirror, then ask himself whether I would ever  
that my moral stature is at the mercy of his actions "  
it out of here!" cried Mr. Thompson, yanking Ferris to his  
"Get out! Don't let me hear another squeak out of you!" He  
the door open and pushed Ferris at the startled face of a  
outside

and let them drop with a  
ce was expressionless  
"Isn't there anybody who

uses nothing to talk about."

"We've got to convince you. Is there anyone you'd  
to talk to?"

"No."  
thought maybe . . . it's because she talks—used to talk—like  
at times . . . maybe if I sent Miss Dagny Taggart to tell

"She's my only failure  
I on my side. But she  
e'd sell her soul for her  
lap her face."

No, no, no! You don't have to see her, if that's how you feel  
n't want to waste more time on people who rub you the wrong  
Only . . . only if it's not Miss Taggart. I don't know  
me to pick . . . If . . . if I could find somebody you'd be will-  
to consider or . . ."

"I've changed my mind," said Galt. "There is somebody I'd like to  
sk to."

"Who?" cried Mr. Thompson eagerly.

"Dr. Robert Stadler."

Mr. Thompson emitted a long whistle and shook his head ap-  
prehensively. "That one is no friend of yours," he said in a tone of  
best warning.

"He's the one I want to see."

"Okay, if you wish. If you say so. Anything you wish. I'll have  
n here tomorrow morning."

That evening, dining with Wesley Mouch in his own suite, Mr.  
Thompson glared angrily at a glass of tomato juice placed before  
him. "What? No grapefruit juice?" he snapped, his doctor had pre-  
scribed grapefruit juice as protection against an epidemic of colds.  
"No grapefruit juice," said the waiter, with an odd kind of empha-  
sis.

"Fact is," said Mouch bleakly, "that a gang of raiders attacked a  
train at the Taggart Bridge on the Mississippi. They blew up the  
deck and damaged the bridge. Nothing serious. It's being repaired  
—but all traffic is held up and the trains from Arizona can't get  
through."

"That's ridiculous! Aren't there any other—?" Mr. Thompson  
stopped, he knew that there were no other railroad bridges across  
the Mississippi. After a moment, he spoke up in a staccato voice  
"Order army detachments to guard the bridge. Day and night."









"any longer! Do you hear me? I am not afraid! Who are you blame me, you miserable failure? Here's where your road has left you! Here you are, caught, helpless, under guard, to be led by those brutes at any moment—and you dare to accuse me of being impractical! Oh yes, you're going to be killed! You won't! You can't be allowed to win! You are the man who has to be killed!"

Dr Stadler's gasp was a muffled scream, as if the immobility of the figure on the floor had been a living thing, and

N . . . . . side,

He . . . . .

Galt's voice had the same unbending austerity as his eyes. "You've said everything I wanted to say to you."

Dr Stadler banged his fists against the door, when it was closed, he ran out of the room.

For three days, no one entered Galt's suite except the guards who brought him meals. Early on the evening of the fourth day, the door opened to admit Chick Morrison with two companions. Chick

He pointed to the door of the bedroom where a trunk was filled with expensive garments which Galt had not chosen to wear. "You will please put on your dinner clothes. He added, his was an order, Mr. Galt."

Galt walked silently into the bedroom. The three men followed. Chick Morrison sat on the edge of a chair, staring and discarding one cigarette after another. The valet went through too many too urtuous motions, helping Galt to dress, handing him his shirt, socks, holding his coat. The muscular man stood in a corner, his hands in his pocket. No one said a word.

"You will please co-operate, Mr. Galt," said Chick Morrison, when Galt was ready, and indicated the door with a courtly gesture of invitation to proceed.

So swiftly that no one could catch the motion of his hand, the muscular man was holding Galt's arm and pressing an invisible gun against his ribs. "Don't make any false moves," he said in an expressionless voice.

"I never do," said Galt. Chick Morrison opened the door. The valet stayed behind. The three figures in dinner clothes walked silently down the hall to the elevator.

They remained silent in the elevator, the clicks of the wheels marking their downward progress.

The elevator stopped on the mezzanine floor. Two armed soldiers preceded them and two others followed as they walked through the long dim corridors. The corridors were deserted except for armed sentinels posted at the turns. The muscular man's right arm was linked to Galt's left; the gun remained invisible to any possible observer. Galt felt the small pressure of the muzzle against his side; the pressure was expertly maintained, not to be felt as an impediment and not to be forgotten for a moment.

The corridor led to a wide closed doorway. The soldiers seemed to melt away into the shadows when Chuck Morrison's hand touched the doorknob. It was his hand that opened the door, but the sudden contrast of light and sound made it seem as if the door were flung open by an explosion: the light came from three hundred bulbs in the blazing chandeliers of the grand ballroom of the Wayne Farland Hotel; the sound was the applause of five hundred people.

Chuck Morrison led the way to the speakers' table raised on a platform above the tables filling the room. The people seemed to know without announcement that of the two figures following him it was the tall slender man with the gold-copper hair that they were applauding. His face had the same quality as the voice they had heard on the radio: calm, confident—and out of reach.

The seat reserved for Galt was the place of honor in the center of the long table, with Mr. Thompson waiting for him at his right and the muscular man slipping skillfully into the seat at his left, not relinquishing his arm or the pressure of the muzzle. The jewels on the naked shoulders of women carried the glitter of the chandeliers to the shadows of the tables crowded against the distant walls; the severe black and white of the men's figures rescued the room's air of solemnly regal luxury from the discordant slashes made by new cameras, microphones and a dormant array of television equipment. The crowd was on its feet, applauding Mr. Thompson while smiling and watching Galt's face with the eager, anxious look of an adult waiting for a child's reaction to a spectacularly generous gift. Galt sat facing the ovation, neither ignoring it nor responding.

"The applause you are hearing," a radio announcer was yelling into a microphone in a corner of the room, "is in greeting to John Galt, who has just taken his place at the speakers' table! Yes, my friends, John Galt in person—as those of you who can find a television set will have a chance to see for yourself in a short while."

I must remember where I am—thought Dagny, clenching her fists under the tablecloth in the obscurity of a side table. It was hard to maintain a sense of double reality in the presence of Galt, then, feet away from her. She felt that no danger or pain could exist in the world so long as she could see his face—and simultaneously a icy terror when she looked at those who held him in their power when she remembered the blind irrationality of the event they were staging. She fought to keep her facial muscles rigid, not to betray herself by a smile of happiness or by a scream of panic.

She wondered how his eyes had been able to pierce the crowd. She had seen the brief pause of his

He could notice the silence had been more

in the  
no one  
to

force  
clothes  
made  
ed the  
d have  
nbered  
own words, with a stab of longing—should be only for those  
who have something to celebrate

AWSON.

Her breathes . . . the plat-  
ures of  
tortured  
ding in  
ardial;  
ordered  
who was prisoner here and who was master Her glance moved  
slowly down the line-up of his table Mr Thompson, Wesley  
Mauch, Chuck Morrison, some generals, some members of the Legis-  
lature and, preposterously, Mr. Mowen, chosen as a bribe to Galt,  
is a symbol of big business She glanced about the room, looking  
for the face of Dr Stadler, he was not present.

The voices filling the room were like a fever chart, she thought;  
they fell . . . into matches of silence,  
mpleted,  
ghboring  
noise and

w pretend it meant.  
She could not swallow the food that was placed before her; her  
throat seemed closed by a rigid convulsion She noticed that the  
others at her table were also merely pretending to eat Dr Ferris  
was the only one whose appetite seemed unaffected

as the only one whose appetite seemed unaffected  
in a crystal bowl before her,  
at  
re  
aved to









of the r own He laughed in their faces, with bitterly incredulous contempt.

"You dont know what you're doing, you miserable juvenile delinquents! Do you think that you—you!—can handle a high-precision instrument of science? Who is your leader? I demand to see your leader!"

It was his tone of overbearing authority his contempt and their own panic—the blind panic of men of unbridled violence who have no standards of safety or danger—that made them waver and wonder whether he was, perhaps some secret top level member of their leadership, they were equally ready to defy or obey any authority After being shunted from one jittery commander to another, he found himself at last being led down iron stairways and down long, echoing, underground corridors of reinforced concrete to an audience with "The Boss in person

The Boss had taken refuge in the underground control room. Among the complex spirals of the delicate scientific machinery that produced the sound ray, against the wall panel of glittering levers, dials and gauges, known as the Xylophone Robert Stadler faced the new ruler of Project X. It was Cuffy Meigs

He wore a tight, semi military tunic and leather leggings, the Bash of his neck bulged over the edge of his collar his black curls were matted with sweat He was pacing restlessly unsteadily in front of the Xylophone, shouting orders to men who kept rushing in and out of the room

"Send couriers to every county seat within our reach! Tell 'em that the Friends of the People have won! Tell 'em they're not to take orders from Washington any longer! The new capital of the Peoples Commonwealth is Harmony City, henceforth to be known as Meigsville! Tell 'em that I'll expect five hundred thousand dollars per every five thousand heads of population, by tomorrow morning—or else!"

It took some time before Cuffy Meigs' attention and bleary brown eyes could be drawn to focus on the person of Dr Stadler

"Well, what is it? What is it?" he snapped.

"I am Dr Robert Stadler"

"Huh?—Oh, yeah! Yeah! You're the big guy from outer space, aren't you? You're the fellow who catches atoms or something."

"Well, what on earth are you doing here?"

"It is I who should ask you that question."

"Huh? Look, Professor, I'm in no mood for jokes."

"I have come here to take control"

"Control? Of what?"

"Of this equipment. Of this place. Of the countryside within its radius of operation"

Meigs stared at him blankly for a moment, then asked softly,

"How did you get here?"

"By car"

"I mean, whom did you bring with you?"

"Nobody"

"What weapons did you

"None My name is sufficient.

"You came here alone with your name and your car?"

"I did

Cuffy Meigs burst out laughing in his face

"Do you think asked Dr Stadler that you can operate a installation of this kind?"

"Run along Professor run along! Beat it before I have to shot! We've got no use for intellectuals around here!"

How much do you know about this? Dr Stadler pointed to the Xylophone

"Who cares? Technicians are a dime a dozen these days! Be it! This ain't Washington! I'm through with those infra red dreamers in Washington! They won't get anywhere bargaining with

in a while Dr Stadler realized that Meigs was drunk

"Don't touch those levers you fool

Meigs jerked his hand back involuntarily, then waved it defiantly at the panel. I'll touch anything I please! Don't you tell me what to do"

"Get away from that panel! Get out of here! This is mine! Do you understand? It's my property!"

"Property? Huh!" Meigs gave a brief bark that was a chuckle.

"I invented it! I created it! I made it possible!"

"You did? Well many thanks Doc Many thanks but we don't need you any longer We've got our own mechanics"

Have you any idea what I had to know in order to make possible? You couldn't think of a single tube of it! Not a single bolt!"

Meigs shrugged "Maybe not"

"Then how dare you think that you can own it? How dare you come here? What claim do you have to it?"

Meigs patted his holster This

Listen, you drunken lout!" cried Dr Stadler "Do you know what you're playing with?"

"Don't you talk to me like that you old fool! Who are you? Talk to me like that? I can break your neck with my bare hands! Don't you know who I am?"

"You're a scared thug way out of his depth!"

"Oh I am am I? I'm the Boss! I'm the Boss and I'm not going to be stopped by an old scarecrow like you! Get out of here!"

They stood staring at each other for a moment, by the panel of the Xylophone both cornered by terror The unadmitted root of Dr Stadler's terror was his frantic struggle not to acknowledge that he was looking at his final product that this was his spiritual son. Cuffy Meigs terror had wider roots it embraced all of existence he had lived in chronic terror all his life but now he was struggling not to acknowledge what it was that he had dreaded a moment of his triumph, when he expected to be safe, this

mysterious, occult breed—the intellectual—was refusing to fear him and defying his power.

"Get out of here!" snarled Cuffy Meigs "I'll call my men! I'll have you shot!"

"Get out of here, you lousy, brainless, swaggering moron!" snarled Dr Stadler "Do you think I'll let you cash in on *my* life?

Do you think it's for *you* that I . . . that I sold—" He did not finish "Stop touching those levers, God damn you!"

"Don't you give me orders! I don't need you to tell me what to do! You're not going to scare me with your classy mumbo jumbo!

I'll do as I please! What did I fight for, if I can't do as I please?" He chuckled and reached for a lever

"Hey, Cuffy, take it easy!" yelled some figure in the back of the room, darting forward.

"Stand back!" roared Cuffy Meigs "Stand back, all of you! Scared, am I? I'll show you who's boss!"

Dr Stadler leaped to stop him—but Meigs shoved him aside with one arm, gave a gulp of laughter at the sight of Stadler falling to the floor, and, with the other arm, yanked a lever of the Xylophone

The crash of sound—the screeching crash of ripped metal and of pressures colliding—

monster  
sound  
to the  
es, shot  
n as a  
miles,  
blucks,  
as if

issued and minced by a single second's blow, with no time for a sound to be heard by the twisted bodies of the victims—and on the circle's periphery, halfway across the Mississippi, the engine and the first six cars of a passenger train flew as a shower of metal into the water in the river along with the western spans of the Taggart Bridge, cut in half

On the site of what had once been Project X, nothing remained alive among the ruins—except for some endless minutes longer, a huddle of torn flesh and screaming pain that had once been a great mind.

freedom—thought Dagny—in

and of a O: in



units of it, but it looked like a perfunctory terror. Their expressions ranged from blank apathy to the relieved look of cheats who had relieved that the game could end no other way and were making no effort to contest it or regret it—to the petulant blindness of Dawson, who refused to be conscious of anything—to the peculiar mystery of Jim, whose face suggested a secret smile.

"Well? Well?" Dr. Ferris was asking impatiently, with the racking energy of a man who feels at home in a world of hysteria. What are you now going to do with him? Argue? Debate? Make speeches?"

No one answered.

"He . . . has . . . to . . . save . . . us," said Mouch slowly, straining the last of his mind into blankness and delivering an ultimatum to reality. "He has to . . . take over . . . and save the system."

"Oh . . ."

show what he meant.

"You objected to that private research project of mine as 'impractical,' said Ferris softly. "But what did I tell you?"

Mouch did not answer, he was cracking his knuckles.

"This is no time for squeamishness," James Taggart spoke up with unexpected vigor, but his voice, too, was oddly low. "We don't have to be fussies about it."

"It seems to me . . ." said Mouch dully, "that . . . that the end justifies the means . . ."

"It's too late for any scruples or any principles," said Ferris. "Only direct action can work now."

No one answered, they were acting as if they wished that their names, not their words, would state what they were discussing.

"It won't work," said Tinky Holloway. "He won't give in."

"That's what you think!" said Ferris, and chuckled. "You haven't seen our experimental model in action. Last month, we got three confessions in three unsolved murder cases."

"If . . ." started Mr. Thompson, and his voice cracked suddenly into a moan, "if he dies, we all perish!"

"Don't worry," said Ferris. "He won't. The Ferris Persuader is safely calculated against that possibility."

Mr. Thompson did not answer. "It seems to me . . . that we have no other choice . . ." said

Mouch, it was almost a whisper. Mr. Thompson was struggling not to see

They remained silent. Mr. Thompson then he cried suddenly, "Oh, do

whis-

st



whispering tensely in front of the crackling blue void of an empty television screen.

Snatching in the tight space of the telephone booth, as in the cabin of a ship about to take off for a different planet, she dialed the number OZ 6-5693.

The voice that answered at once was Francisco's. "Hello?"

"Francisco?"

"Hello, Dagry. I was expecting you to call."

"Did you hear the broadcast?"

"I did."

"They are now planning to force him to give in." She kept her voice to the tone of a factual report. "They intend to torture him. They have some machine called the Ferris Persuader, in an isolated unit on the grounds of the State Science Institute. It's in New Hampshire. They mentioned it, you know. They mentioned that they would have him on the radio within three hours."

"I see. Are you talking from a public phone booth?"

"Yes."

"You're still in evening clothes, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Now listen carefully. Go home, change your clothes, pack a few things you'll need, take your jewelry and any valuables that you can carry, take some warm clothing. We won't have time to wait later. Meet me in forty minutes, on the northwest corner, two blocks east of the main entrance of the Taggart Terminal."

"Right."

"So long, Dagry."

"So long, Frisco."

She was in the bedroom of her apartment, in less than five minutes, tearing off her evening gown. She left it lying in the middle of the floor. Like the discarded uniform of an army she was not wearing any longer. She put on a dark blue suit and—remembering Dag's words—a white, high-collared sweater. She packed a suitcase with a bag with a strap that she could carry swung over her shoulder. She put her jewelry in a corner of the bag, including the emerald and diamond bracelet she had earned in the outside world, and the five-dollar gold piece she had earned in the valley.

It was easy to leave the apartment and to lock the door, even though she knew she would probably never open it again. It seemed odd, for a moment, when she came to her office. No one had been there since she came in, the anteroom of her office was empty; the Taggart Building seemed unusually quiet. She stood looking for a moment at this room and at all the years it had contained. Then she smiled—no, it was not too hard, she thought, she opened her door and took the documents she had come here to get. There was nothing else that she wanted to take from her office—except the portrait of Nathaniel Taggart and the map of Taggart Transcontinental. She broke the two frames, folded the picture and the map, and slipped them into her suitcase.

She was locking the suitcase when she heard the sound of a door opening. The door flew open and an engineer rubbed his eyes.





were too many police cars speeding by, and too many sirens bursting in the distance. The news of the destruction of the Bridge was apparently spreading through the city, they would know that the city was doomed and they would start a stampede to escape—but they had no place to go, and it was not her concern any longer. She saw Francisco's figure approaching from some distance away; she recognized the swiftness of his walk, before she could distinguish the face under the cap pulled low over his eyes. She caught the moment when he saw her, as he came closer. He waved his arm with a smile.

Then he took her suitcase with one hand, her arm with the other, and said, "Come on."

The unit known as "Project F"—in honor of its originator, Dr. Ferns—was a small structure of reinforced concrete, low on the slope of the hill that supported the State Science Institute on a higher, more public level. Only the small gray patch of the unit's roof could be seen from the Institute's windows, hidden in a jungle of ancient trees; it looked no bigger than the cover of a manhole.

The unit consisted of two stories in the shape of a small cube placed asymmetrically on top of a larger one. The first story had no windows, only a door studded with iron spikes, the second story

was a door; nobody had ever suggested the impression that the structure housed a project devoted to experiments with the germs of deadly diseases.

The two floors were occupied by laboratories that contained a great many cages with guinea pigs, dogs and rats. But the heart and meaning of the structure was a room in its cellar, deep under the ground, the room had been incompetently lined with the porous sheets of sound proofing material, the sheets had begun to crack and showed through.

carefully chosen on its capacity for obedience.

The sixteen were stationed for the night outside the structure in the deserted laboratories above the ground, where they remained uncritically on duty, with no curiosity about anything that might be taking place below.

In the cellar room under the ground, Dr Ferris, Wesley Mot and James Taggart sat in armchairs lined up against one wall. A machine that looked like a small cabinet of irregular shape sat in a corner across from them. Its face bore rows of glass dials, each dial marked by a segment of red, a square screen that looked like an amplifier, rows of numbers, rows of wooden knobs, plastic buttons, a single lever controlling a switch on one side, a single red glass button at the other. The face of the machine seemed to have more expression than the face of the mechanic in charge of it. He was a husky young man in a sweat-stained shirt with sleeves rolled above the elbows, his pale blue eyes were glazed by an enormously conscientious concentration on his task. He moved his lips once in a while as if reciting a memorized lesson.

A short wire led from the machine to an electric storage battery behind it. Long coils of wire, like the twisted arms of an octopus, stretched forward across the stone floor, from the machine to a leather mattress spread under a cone of violent light. John Galt lay strapped to the mattress. He was naked, the small metal disks—electrodes at the ends of the wires—were attached to his wrists, his shoulders, his hips and his ankles, a device resembling a stethoscope was attached to his chest and connected to the amplifier.

"Get this straight," said Dr Ferris, addressing him for the first time. "We want you to take full power over the economy of the country. We want you to become a dictator. We want you to rule. Understand? We want you to give orders and to figure out the right orders to give. What we want, we mean to get. Speeches, long arguments or passive obedience won't save you now. We need ideas—or else. We won't let you out of here until you tell us the exact measures you'll take to save our system. Then we'll have you tell it to the country over the radio." He raised his wrist, displaying a stop-watch. "I'll give you thirty seconds to decide whether you want to start talking right now. If not, then we'll start. Do you understand?"

Galt was looking straight at them, his face expressionless, as he understood too much. He did not answer.

They heard the sound of the stop watch in the silence counting off the seconds, and the sound of Mouch's choked, irregular breathing as he gripped the arms of his chair.

Ferris waved a signal to the mechanic at the machine. The mechanic threw the switch. It lighted the red glass button and off two sounds: one was the low humming drone of an electric generator, the other was a peculiar beat, as regular as the tick of a clock, but with an oddly muffled resonance. It took them a moment to realize that it came from the amplifier and that they were hearing the beat of Galt's heart.

"Number three," said Ferris, raising a finger in signal.

The mechanic pressed a button under one of the dials. A long shudder ran through Galt's body, his left arm shook in jerking spasms, convulsed by the electric current that circled between his chest and shoulder. His head fell back, his eyes closed, his lips drawn tight. He made no sound.

When the mechanic lifted his finger off the button, Galt's arm stopped shaking. He did not move.

The three men glanced about them with an instant's look of groping. Ferris' eyes were blank, Mouch's terrified Taggart's disappointed. The sound of the thumping beat went on through the silence.

"Number two," said Ferris.

invulsions, with the cur-  
like His hands gripped  
once from side to side,  
v faintly faster  
Amulii was drawing away, pressing against the back of his arm-  
hair then, leaning forward.

twisted in long  
the current was  
on running from his one wrist to the other, across his lungs. The  
mechanic was slowly turning a knob, increasing the voltage of the  
current; the needle on the dial was moving toward the red segment  
that marked danger. Galt's breath was coming in broken, panting  
sounds out of convulsed lungs.

"Had enough?" snarled Ferris, when the current went off.  
Galt did not answer. His lips moved faintly, opening for air. The  
beat from the stethoscope was racing. But his breath was falling  
in an even rhythm, by a controlled effort at relaxation.

"You're too easy on him!" yelled Taggart, staring at the naked  
body on the mattress.

Galt opened his eyes and glanced at them for a moment. They  
could tell nothing, except that his glance was steady and fully  
conscious. Then he dropped his head again and lay still, as if he  
had forgotten them.

of none in this cellar. They  
knowledge. The  
the flat hips, to  
ed like a statue  
stylized to a  
r, suggesting  
iver, but of  
e of ancient  
spirit of this

reece—the statue of man as a  
century's halls, so his body clashed with a cellar devoted to pre-  
historical activities. The clash was the greater, because he seemed  
belong with electric wires, with stainless steel with pre-  
instruments, with the levers of a control board. Perhaps this was  
ought most fiercely. At deeply buried at the  
his watchers' sensations.



"Go ahead!" cried Taggart. "What are you waiting for? Can't you make the current stronger? He hasn't even screamed yet!"

"What's the matter with you?" gasped Mouch, catching a glimpse of Taggart's face while a current was twisting Galt's body. Taggart

ant what we want?"

They heard no answer. Galt raised his head once in a while and looked at them. There were dark rings under his eyes, but the eyes were clear and conscious.

In mounting panic, the watchers lost their sense of context and language—and their three voices blended into a progression of indiscriminate shrieks. "We want you to take over! We want you to rule! We order you to give orders! We demand that you dictate! We order you to save us! We order you to think!"

They heard no answer but the beating of the heart on which their own lives depended.

The current was shooting through Galt's chest and the beating

all opened his eyes and raised his head.

Then they realized that the drone of the motor had ceased too and that the red light had gone out on the control panel. The current

utton, to no avail  
ain. He kicked the  
on the sound did

in return.

"Well?" snapped Fetris. "Well? What's the matter?"

"The generator's on the blink," said the mechanic helplessly.

"What's the matter with it?"

"I don't know."

"Well, find out and fix it!"

The man was not a trained electrician. He had been chosen not for his knowledge but for his uncritical capacity for pushing any instructions the effort he needed to learn his task was such that his consciousness could be relied upon to have no room for anything but the rear panel of the machine and stared in

"I don't know."

Who am I to know?"

The three men were on their feet crowding behind the man to stare at his recalcitrant organs. They were acting merely by reflex; they knew that they did not



"I don't care! I want to break him! I want to hear him scream!  
I want—"

And then it was Taggart who screamed. It was a long sudden  
screaming scream as if at some sudden sight though his eyes were  
staring at space and seemed blankly sightless. The sight he was  
confronting was within him. The protective walls of emotion of  
so words built up by  
in the span of one  
wanted Galt to die.

I directed all the ac  
ove for  
which  
y what  
re urge

by reality by the destruction of every living value for the  
sake of proving to himself that he could exist in defiance of  
reality and would never have to be bound by any solid immutable  
facts. A moment ago he had been able to feel that he hated  
Galt above all men that the hatred was proof of Galt's evil  
which he need define no further that he wanted Galt to be de-  
stroyed for the sake of his own survival. Now he knew that he  
had wanted Galt's destruction at the price of his own destruction to  
follow, he knew that he had never wanted to survive. He knew that  
wanted to torture and destroy—he  
own admission greatness by the  
anyone chose to admit it or not  
master of reality in a manner no

was equaled in the moment when he James Taggart had  
found himself facing the ultimatum to accept reality or die. It  
was death his emotions had chosen death rather than surrender to  
that realm of which Galt was so radiant a son. In the person of  
Galt—he knew—he had sought the destruction of all existence.

It was not by means of words that this knowledge confronted  
his consciousness as all his knowledge had consisted of emotions  
and a vision that he had no

with her joyous eagerness to  
eagerness he had always wanted to defeat—he was seeing  
the face of a killer whom all men should rightfully loathe who  
destroyed values for being values, who killed in order not to dis-  
cover his own irredeemable evil.

"No" he moaned staring at that vision shaking his head to  
escape. "No" No

"Yes" said Galt  
He saw Galt's eyes looking straight at him as if Galt were  
the thing he was seeing.

"I told you that on the radio" said Galt.





"Oh, no ma'am! But . . . but if Dr Ferris said to let nobody in, it means nobody—" He added uncertainly and pleadingly, "doesn't it?"

"Do you know that I am Dagny Taggart and that you've seen my pictures in the papers with Mr Thompson and all the top leaders of the country?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then decide whether you wish to disobey their orders."

"Oh, no, ma'am! I don't!"

"Then let me in."

"But I can't disobey Dr Ferris, either!"

"Then choose."

"But I can't choose, ma'am! Who am I to choose?"

"You'll have to."

"Look," he said hastily, pulling a key from his pocket and running to the door, "I'll ask the chief. He—"

"No," she said.

Some quality in the tone of her voice made him whirl back to

or I shoot

have that

His mouth fell open and the key dropped from his hand.

"Get out of my way," she said.

He shook his head frantically, pressing his back against the door. "Oh Christ, ma'am!" he gulped in the whine of a desperate man. "I'm not Thompson!"

"It's your life," she said.

"I'm not Thompson!"

order from Mr

"You don't. Maybe I haven't. Maybe I'm acting on my own—and you'll be punished for obeying me. Maybe I have—and you'll be punished for disobeying me."

est

on

r to

ne

decide them yourself."

"But I can't decide! Why me?"

"Because it's your body that's barring my way."

"But I can't decide! I'm not supposed to decide!"

"I'll count to three," she said. "Then I'll shoot."

"Wait! Wait! I haven't said yes or no!" he cried, cringing tighter against the door, as if immobility of mind and body were his best protection.

"One—" she counted, she could see his eyes staring at her

error—"Two—" she could see that the gun held less terror



his shattered fingers, and his muffled howl of pain. He collapsed, roaring. In the instant when the second guard grasped it, he saw that Francisco's gun was aimed at him.

"Don't shoot, mister!" he cried

"Come down here with your hands up," ordered Francisco, holding his gun aimed with one hand and waving a signal to the crack of the door with the other.

By the time the guard descended the stairs Rearden was there to disarm him, and Danneskjold to tie his hands and feet. The sight of Dagny seemed to frighten him more than the rest, he could not understand it the three men wore caps and windbreakers, and, but for their manner, could be taken for a gang of highwaymen, the presence of a lady was inexplicable.

"Now," said Francisco, "where is your chief?"

The guard jerked his head in the direction of the stairs "Up here."

"How many guards are there in the building?"

"Nice"

"Where are they?"

"One's on the cellar stairs The others are all up there."

Видео?

**"In the big laboratory The one with the window"**

"All of them?"

**“Yes”**

"What are these rooms?" He pointed at the doors leading off the hall.

<sup>6</sup>They're 1 to 2. "There's 1 to 1.32 - the night."

from Pete's pocket and  
hile Francisco continued,

"Are there any other men in the building?"

**No**

"Isn't there a prisoner here?"

"Oh yeah, I guess so. There must be or they wouldn't've kept us all on duty."

"Is he still here?"

$$T_{\text{eff}} = T + \frac{1}{2} \frac{v^2}{c^2} T$$

right on the stair

$$-\gamma_{\text{CS}}^{\text{u}}$$

"How many doors are there?"

"Three. It's the one in the middle."

"What are the other rooms?"

"There's the small laboratory on one side and on the other."

"Are there connecting doors between them?"

"Yes"

Francisco was turning to

ons, when the guard

pleadingly, "Mister can I ask you a question?"

"Go ahead

"Who are you?"

He answered in the solemn tone of a drawing room introduction: "Francisco Domingo Carlos Andres Sebastian d'Anconia."

He left the guard gaping at him and turned to a brief whisper consultation with his companions.

In a moment it was Rearden who went up the stairs—swiftly and alone.

Cages containing rats and guinea pigs were stacked against walls of the laboratory they had been . . .

were . . .  
them . . .  
the . . .  
it was Rearden's face that saved him from being shot on sight when he entered his face was well known to them and too unexpected. He saw eight heads stare at him with recognition and with inability to believe what they were recognizing.

He stood at the door his hands in the pockets of his trousers with the casual confident manner of a business executive.

"Who is in charge here?" he asked in the politely abrupt voice of a man who does not waste time.

"You . . . you're not . . ." stammered a lanky, surly individual at the card table.

"I'm Hank Rearden. Are you the chief?"

"Yesh! But where in blazes do you come from?"

"From New York."

"What are you doing here?"

"Then I take it you have not been notified."

"Should I have . . . I mean about what?" The swift, touch-resentful suspicion that his superiors had slighted his authority was obvious in the chief's voice. He was a tall emaciated man, with jerky movements, a sallow face and the restless unfocused eyes of a drug addict.

"About my business here."

"You . . . you can't have any business here," he snapped, torn between the fear of a bluff and the fear of having been left out of some important top level decision. "Aren't you a traitor and deserter and a—"

"I see that you're behind the times, my good man."

The seven others in the room were staring at Rearden with awed superstitious uncertainty. The two who held guns still held them aimed at him in the impassive manner of automatons. He did not seem to take notice of them.

"What is it you say is your business here?" snapped the chief.

"I am here to take charge of the prisoner whom you are to deliver to me."

"If you came from headquarters you'd know that I'm not supposed to know anything about any prisoner—and that nobody is to touch him!"

"Except me."

The chief leaped to his feet, darted to a telephone and seized the receiver. He had not raised it halfway to his ear when he dropped it abruptly with a gesture that sent a vibration of panic through the room. He had had time to hear that the telephone was dead and now that the wires were cut.

His look of accusation as he whirled to Rearden broke against the faintly contemptuous reproof of Rearden's voice. "That's no way to guard a building—if *this* is what you allowed to happen. Better let me have the prisoner, before anything happens to him—if you don't want me to report you for negligence, as well as insubordination."

The chief dropped heavily back on his chair, slumped forward across the table and looked up at Rearden with a glance that made his emaciated face resemble the animals that were beginning to stir in the cages.

"Who is the prisoner?" he asked.

"But haven't you heard?"

"What?"

"John Galt has made a deal with the government and has brought us all back."

"Oh thank God!" cried one of the guards, the youngest.

"Shut your mouth! You're not to have any political opinions!" snapped the chief and jerked back to Rearden. "Why hasn't it been announced on the radio?"

"Do you presume to hold opinions on when and how the government should choose to announce its policies?"

In the long moment of silence they could hear the creak of the

... slowly, he corners to move weakened

... from Rearden's face to the two guards. The gunmen steadied their aim by an adjustment. A nervous rustle went through the shrilly in one of the cages



"We do. You don't know who your prisoner is. We do. You don't know why your bosses want you to guard him. We know why we want to get him out. You don't know the purpose of your fight. We know the purpose of ours. If you die, you won't know what you're dying for. If we do, we will."

"Don't . . . don't listen to him!" snarled the chief. "Shoot! I order you to shoot!"

One of the guards looked at the chief, dropped his gun and, raising his arms, backed away from the group toward Rearden.

At that moment, a tall, slender figure of a man flew into the room, landed on its

feet into a crouch, and then, like a cat, sprang up and stood at attention, its arms straight out in front of it.

A tall, slender figure of a man flew into the room, landed on its feet into a crouch, and then, like a cat, sprang up and stood at attention, its arms straight out in front of it.

By the time the four survivors of the garrison began to reassemble in pieces of their consciousness, their figures were stretched on the floor, bound and gagged, the fifth one was left standing, his hands tied behind his back.

"Where is the prisoner?" Francisco asked him.

"In the cellar . . . I guess."

"Who has the key?"

"Dr Ferris."

"Where are the stairs to the cellar?"

"Behind a door in Dr Ferris' office."

"Lead the way."

As they started, Francisco turned to Rearden. "Are you all right, Hank?"

"Sure."

"Need to rest?"

"Hell, no!"

From the threshold of a door in Ferris' office, they looked down a steep flight of stone stairs and saw a guard on the landing below.

"Come here with your hands up!" ordered Francisco.

The guard looked up at them, then down at the stairs, then back up at them.

of the stairs, then back up at them. The guard looked up at them, then down at the stairs, then back up at them.

Then the four rescuers were free to fly down the stairs to the locked steel door at the bottom. They had acted and moved with the precision of a controlled discipline. Now, it was as if their inner reins had broken.

Danneskjöld had the tools to smash the lock, enter the cellar, and his arm barred Dagny's way a second—for the length of a look to make certain it was bearable—then he let her rush past him beyond

first to  
of  
was  
to





dash the torture machine into splinters

With the sound of the door slamming shut behind them and the  
reward thrust of the wheels under their feet, Francisco smiled for  
the first time.

"Thank you, Hank," he said  
Rearden smiled. "I will repeat what you said when I thanked you,  
on our first meeting. 'If you understand that I acted for my own  
sake, you know that no gratitude is required.'"  
"I will repeat," said Galt, "the answer you gave me. 'That is why  
I thank you.'"

Francisco had produced a first-aid kit and was removing Rearden's  
hurt to bandage his wound. Galt saw the thin red trickle running  
from Rearden's shoulder down his chest.

Dagny noticed that they looked at each other as if their glance  
were the handshake of a bond too firm to require any statement.  
Rearden saw her watching them—and the faintest contraction of his  
eyes was like a smile of sanction, as if his glance were repeating to  
her the message he had sent her from the valley.

They heard the golden sound of the wind.

They heard the golden sound of the wind.

fully in a  
speaking  
Yes, he a  
manent i  
wound, t  
ome right



